BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

WHAT IS ADVAITA?

P. Sankaranarayanan

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

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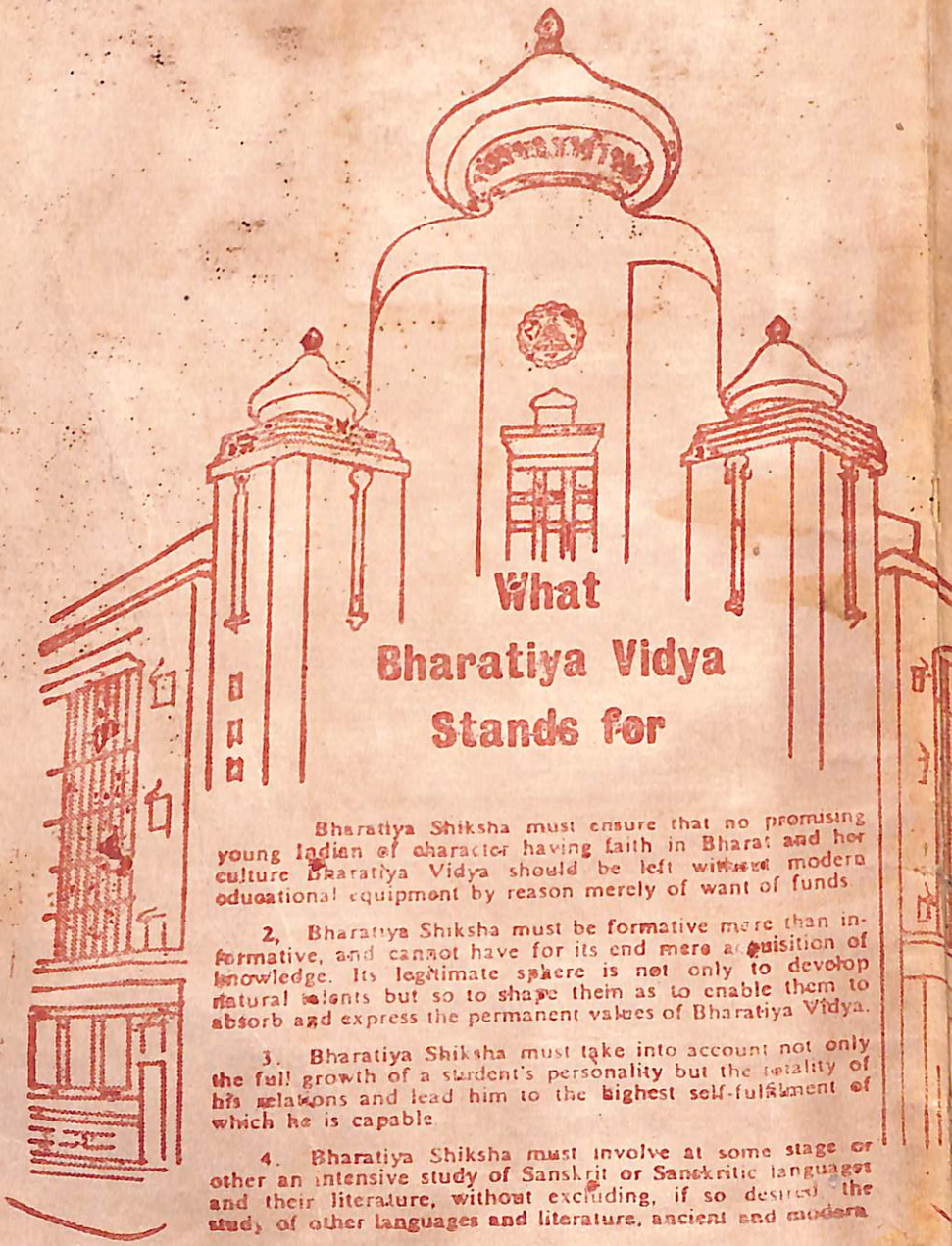
BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY



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Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

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(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles, and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Sahitya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which is flowing from the supreme life of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form of attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, 1-89-1

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WHAT IS ADVAITA?

By

P. SANKARANARAYANAN

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P. SANKARANARAYANAN

1970

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of Books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative

art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern, or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: 'What is not in it, is nowhere'. After twenly-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine: it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
3rd October, 1951,

K. M. MUNSHI

FOREWORD

Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan has written this book: "What Is Advaita?" for the purpose of elucidating clearly and succinctly the truths of Advaita to the laymen who are anxious to know them. He is very well qualified to do so being himself a scholar in Philosophy and having devoted a good deal of time to the study of Advaita as expounded in our great philosophical works, especially in those of Śankara Bhagavatpāda. He has been a successful teacher of Philosophy for many years in the Government Colleges of the Madras State, in the Vivekananda College, Madras and in the Bhavan's College, Bombay. He has realised the difficulties of those who want to acquire a knowledge of Advaita and has tried successfully according to me to help them to grasp its fundamental tenets.

The book has been divided into two Parts. Part I is an exposition of Advaita and Part II contains three Appendices. The first is a translation of the articles in the *Advaitākṣaramālikā* published by the Advaita Sabha, Kumbakonam quoting Vedic authority for the doctrines of Advaita. This is followed by explanations of the *Manīṣāpancaka* and the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra* both composed by Śankara Bhagavadpāda which throw a great light on the truths of Advaita.

Prof. Sankaranarayanan rightly points out that Advaita is a *tattva* and not a *mata*, a truth and not a creed or a dogma. Its ultimate validity rests, as declared by Sri Bhagavatpāda in his commantaries on the *Brahma Sūtras*, on the authority of śruti re-inforced by one's own experience. As mentioned in the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭhā*, to realise the ātman, it is neccessary to read together the facts of one's experience, sayings of scripture and the upadeśa of the Guru : *svānubhūtesca śāstrasya guroscaivaikyavākyatā yasya abhyāsena tena ātmā santatamavalokyate.*

The literal meaning of *Advaita* has been given in the standard work of Madhusūdhana Sarasvati called *Siddhānta Bindu* which itself is a commentary on the *Dasaślokī* of Bhagavān Śankara as follows : *dvidhetam dvītamityāhuh tadbhāvo dvaitamucyate na vidyate dvaitam dvīdhā bhāvo yatra tadadvaitamityakṣarārthah.* "That in which there is no two-foldness" is the literal meaning of Advaita.That clearly shows as pointed out by Prof. Sankaranarayanan in the opening chapter of his book that, apart from Brahman, there is no other Reality even though the universe may exist. Advaita establishes the metaphysical truth that pure Brahman is the only Reality according to its strict definition. The author has also expounded the significance of calling the universe as *mithyā* which he says has been wrongly translated as illusion. All the other doctrines of Advaita, the three kinds of *sattā* the

avasthātraya, the nature of the self, the ultimate truth of the self not being different from Brahman are also very clearly explained. He has referred to the doctrine of māyā as adumbrated by Śri Śankara, the necessity for *Vivarta Vāda* to explain how the Infinite has become finite, how the One has become many, how the pure Brahman has become many jīvas and also to the three theories of *bimbapratibimba vāda,* the *avacceda vāda* and the *abhāsā vāda.* In fact, he has succeeded in providing a conspectus of all the doctrines of Advaita as expounded by the great classical writers on the subject.

The question naturally arises in the minds of people who study Advaita as to what is the pragmatic value of its truths. The Professor has rightly pointed out that it is the Advaitic temper and attitude that has enabled our great religion to reconcile all the various sects and upāsanas in our country. The universal appeal of Advaita is also used to inspire a tolerant attitude to all relegions as being so many ways to realise the Godhead and to show that they only differ in emphasis on the facets of the same truth of one God and one Humanity.

Prof. Sankaranarayanan has also rightly emphasised the fact that Science and Advaita do not contradict each other and that the discoveries of Science have shown more and more the validity of the doctrines of Advaita. He

has done well to show that Advaita philosophy is not divorced from religion and that its great expounders from Śrī Śankara downwards have been devotees of the personal God in the profound belief that it is a pre-eminent way to realise the Supreme. He has also dispelled the wrong notion that Advaita has not given an important place to ethical standards. He has pointed out that, on the other hand, ethical standards are necessary for the experience of advaita bhāva.

The Professor has written this book in simple language without technical phraseology which would confuse the mind of the lay reader. I have great pleasure in commending it for study and reflection by all those who desire to know about Advaita.

"Ashrama"
Mylapore, Madras
May 10, 1970

K. BALASUBRAMANIA IYER

PREFACE

In a trilingual monthly Journal called *The Kāmakoti Pradīpam* published from Madras, I wrote a series of articles in Tamil under the title *Pāmararkku Advaitam*: "Advaita for the Layman". They were intended to help the reader who has no knowledge of Sanskrit to obtain a basic acquaintance with the principles and truths of Advaita Vedānta so that, with its aid, he may be able to follow expositions by sāstraic scholars. Before sending each article to the Editor of that Journal, I took care to have it approved by the late lamented savant, Brahmaśrī Śāstraratnākara Polagam Śrīrāma Sastrigal who was then Professor of Vedānta in the Madras Sanskrit College.

A number of my friends put it to me that I might translate these articles into English for the benefit of a wider circle of readers. This I have now done with some re-arrangement of the material in the Tamil articles. In preparing both the original and the translation, I have not loaded them with quotations from scriptures which are the foundational pramāṇas for Advaita since I desired to limit myself to a simple and straightforward narration.

Part II of the book contains three Appendices. The first is a summary of the articles in Sanskrit in the *Advaita Akṣara Mālikā* published on the occasion of

the Golden Jubilee of the Advaita Sabha, Kumbakonam quoting chapter and verse to show Vedic authority for the tenets of Advaita Vedānta. The second and the third Appendices are expositions of the *Manīṣā Pancaka* and the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra* both composed by Śri Śankara Bhagavatpāda in which the truths of Advaita are brought out briefly and clearly. In respect of the former, I have used the commentary called *Tatparyadipikā* by Śrī Sadāsivendrasarasvatī and for the latter, I have pressed into service the *Mānasollāsa* of Śri Sureśvarācārya.

Mr. K. Balasubramania Iyer who is proficient alike in classical lore and modern knowledge has honoured this book with a *Foreword.* I have basked in the sunshine of his friendship and good-will since my youth and he has been uniformly kind and generous in his relations with me, an attitude, which, I am happy to recall, characterised those of his illustrious father with mine. I am very grateful to Mr. Balasubramania Iyer for this additional instance of his friendship.

I must thank the Editors of Bhavan's Book University Series for taking it on themselves to print and publish this book.

Before I conclude, I must refer to a very unfortunate error that has crept into the book on page 145. It is said

there that "Śrī Sadāśiva Brahmendra adorned the Kāmakoti Pīṭa established by Śrī Śankara." This is a mistake. The sentence should be : "Śri Sadāśiva Brahmendra, who was the disciple of Śri Paramaśivendra Sarasvatī that adorned the Kāmakoti Pīṭa established by Śri Śankara, and whose advaitānubhava was incomparable was a devotee of Rāma." I regret the error and request the reader to make the correction on that page.

Mylapore, Madras
Śankara Jayanti, 1970

P. SANKARANARAYANAN.

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ŚRĪ GURUBHYO NAMAH.

"Is the raindrop different from the vast Ocean
Or the spark not one with the Flame?
As the sunbeam is one with the Sun,
So you are one with Me."

—*Gladys De Meuter*

* * * *

WHAT IS ADVAITA?

PART I

I. THE WORLD

Advaita is the Truth about the nature of the Supreme Reality, of Man and of the Universe. It is not a theory, a *mata*. It is a *tattva*. It is not a mere philosophy. It is a final experience or realisation. As the word indicates, it is a denial of the view of duality. It is a-dvaita. The truth is that, in the last analysis, Reality is one only ; of that ultimate Reality, it cannot be said that there are two. It also denies the disparateness of the Universe and Man from that Reality which in Vedāntic language is called Brahman. It does not, however, deny the *existence* of the Universe and of Man ; but it only denies their *reality*. They are forms in which Reality *appears* ; but they are not real *in the manner in which they appear*. They 'exist' ; but they are not 'real'.

Test of Reality

This view is based on the criterion of truth and the test of reality adopted in Advaita. In order that anything may be said to be *true* or *real*, it should abide in all the three periods of Time,

the past, the present and the future. What is seen to exist only in one or two of these divisions of Time cannot be said to be real, i.e. it will be only partially, and not wholly real, if it can be said to be real at all.

Applying this test, it will be found that the things of the world, from the mightiest to the most minute cannot be said to be everlasting. They came to be at a particular time, and will eventually disappear at some other time. They are all parts of a historical process; they are not eternal. They are subject to the mutations of Time, namely, birth, existence, growth, change, decay and death. These are known as ṣadvikārās or six ways of appearance. Every thing and every man are subject to these processes and so, cannot be said to satisfy this test of reality.

If the Universe and Man are not real in the sense that Advaita understands reality, then what is their status? Are they false? Are they illusions? They too are real, but in a special sense. They are not real in the manner that the ultimate Reality is said to be real. The existence of the Universe and of Man is not denied. They are not dismissed as illusions.

Orders of Reality

Advaita speaks of three kinds or orders of 'reality'. The first refers to the 'reality' of a reflection in a mirror or any other reflecting medium. The reflection *is there*, and can be seen. But any one who is not a child knows that in a reflection there is no 'there' and that the reflection does not have the same reality as the object reflected. There is the reflection; it *exists*, but it is not real. So, a reflection is something which exists; for it can be seen; but it is not the object. It is the *appearance* of the object. We speak of the object as the 'reality', and of the reflection as the 'appearance'. The reflection has not the same reality as the object reflected. Its 'reality' in the restricted sense is only, if it can be so put, *reflectional* or *prātibhāsika*.

There is another order of 'reality'. It pertains to the objects of the Universe and to all men and other creatures inhabiting it. 'Let it be conceded', it may be argued, 'that the reflection in the mirror is *not real*; it is only an *appearance*; but surely, you and I and all creatures and all the things of the world which are experienced by our sense organs are real; aren't they?' Yes; they too are 'real', they are not unreal. Their 'reality' also is like the 'reality' of the reflection in the

mirror; only a shade higher. The reflection is the *appearance* of an original which is reflected in it. Without an 'original', there can be no appearance. Every appearance is the appearance of a substratum which appears through a medium.

Rope-Snake: Adhistāna and Āropita

Even so the objects of the universe, which last longer than the reflection in the mirror, are also *appearances*. Appearances of what? Of something which is their original, their basis or substratum. What is that substratum? To understand this we must turn to a classical illustration which Advaita offers. A man mistakes a rope for a snake due to his defective vision or defective light or both. Here there are a substratum and an appearance.

The rope is the substratum and the snake is the appearance. Relatively to the substratum (the rope), the appearance (the snake) is not real. The 'reality' is the rope; the snake is the appearance of that 'reality'. When the terrified man sees the snake, he does not see the rope. But when later he realises either by careful examination or when told by another, that 'it' is not a snake, but a rope, then he sees the rope, and when he does so, he does not see the snake.

Now it may be asked: Is not the snake real? Did it not cause fright to the man? Yes, it is 'real' to *the man in fright*, and *during* his fright; for most 'really' he sees it *over there*. But soon he realises that it is *not there*. It is no more 'real' to him. He now knows that the rope which is the 'reality' here previously appeared to him as the snake.

Again, where did the snake come from? Where did it go? It did not come or go; for to do these, it must have a real entity which in truth it does not possess. If anything, the snake 'came' from the rope for the frightened man and 'disappeared' into it the moment he understood the truth.

But, why did the man see the snake and not the rope? That is because he did not *know* that 'it' was only a rope and not a snake. The mistake was due to his wrong impression caused by his mental condition and the defective environment. It obscured the rope and projected the snake. When he saw the place with the aid of the light of a lamp held out to him by another, he realised his mistake and knew that it was only a rope. The light of correct knowledge dispelled the darkness of the wrong idea and he came to see the truth of the matter.

Now, what is the status of the snake? Is it 'real' or 'unreal'? Before this question is answered, three terms should be clearly understood. They are: *real*, *unreal* and *not-real*. By definition, the *real* is what *is* in all the three periods of time, the past, the present and the future. It is the *sat*. Of it, it must not be said that it *was not* at *any one of these times*. In contrast to the *real*, the *unreal* is what *is not, cannot be at any time*, the past, the present or the future. Of such nature is an impossible thing, like a square circle, or a barren woman's son or a sky flower. It is referred to as the *asat*. The *not-real* is intermediate between the *real* and the *unreal*; it is at sometimes only, not at all times. The snake *is* and is seen by the man while he is in fright. It was not before he was frightened; it ceases to be the moment he comes out of the fright by the light of correct knowledge.

What is *not-real* has a special status. It is not 'real' or *sat* like the ultimate Reality nor is it 'unreal' *asat* like a barren woman's son. The snake which *appears* is not even *asat*. For the *asat* has no basis or substratum. Again, the snake is not *real*, because it does not satisfy the definition of the 'real', i.e. existing at all periods of time.

It disappears before the light of knowledge. It is not unreal like the barren woman's son. The latter cannot appear and cannot be seen. The snake appears to the frightened man and is seen by him. The 'real' cannot be *sublated* and the 'unreal' cannot *appear*. So the snake is neither real nor unreal; it is different from the *sat* and the *asat*; it is simply not-real. In Advaita, it is spoken of as *mithyā*[1] The mithyā has a mermaid sort of reality; it is really false and falsely real. In other words, it exists because it appears; but it is not *real* because it later disappears. It is real for the frightened man subject to a wrong idea but not real for the same man after the disillusionment.

The World—An Appearance

Applying this analogy to the objects of the world, it will be found that they too—in fact, the entire Universe—have the same status as the snake which is the appearance of the rope.

Take any object of the world individually. Each object will be found to possess five aspects.[2] Of it, it can be said that it *is* or *exists*, that it

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1. *mithyā* is a special term in Advaita. It is wrong to translate it as is sometimes done as 'illusion' or 'illusory'.

2. *astibhāti priyaṁ rūpam nāmetyamsa pancakam ādyatrayam brahma rūpam jagadrūpam tatodvayam.*

shines by illumination, native or acquired, that to someone or other it is *dear* and produces joy. In addition to these three features, every object has a certain *form* which distinguishes it from others of the same kind or of a different kind, and this distinctive form is referred to by a *name*. Of these five, the last two, the form and the name are native to the object and are distinctive for each. But, the first three are common to all the objects of the Universe. Of all of them, it is said that they *exist*, they *shine* and they *make for joy*. Only their separate forms and the consequent names are different for each.

What these things possess in common is their real nature, their *sattā*. It will not come and go. It will persist at all periods of time. Its forms are subject to change or decay and with that their names too. The pot may get broken into sherds and pulverised into sand. With each change of form what was the pot gets a different name. But the clay out of which the pot, potsherd or sand came, still retains the first three features of existence, shining and being dear: *asti*, *bhāti*, *priyam*.

Back of these individual instances of these first three features must be Existence, Shining and

Joy *par excellence* from which these features in particular things derive their substance. *That* is the ultimate Reality of them all, the Supremely Real. The existence, shining and making for joy in individual instances are contingent on their particular being; but complementary to them there must be That which is Absolute Existence, Shining and Joy, spoken of respectively as *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*. That Absolute Real is called *Brahman*. It is spoken of as compacted of Existence, Intelligence and Bliss Absolute.

The reality that is clay takes different forms in the potter's hands and gets known as pot, cup, plate, spoon etc. Truly they are all clay, though they are individually called pot, cup, plate and spoon. Pot, cup, plate and spoon are the forms in which the same clay *appears*. Even so, the Supreme Reality or Brahman appears in different forms and is called by different names as mountain, river, tree, house, etc. Mountain, river, tree, house etc. are its appearances subject to change, decay etc., i.e., to ṣadvikārās. If you concentrate on the pot, its colour, size, shape etc. you will not think of the clay. If you think of the clay back of them, you will not be affected by the colour, size shape etc. One who sees these

will not see the clay. Conversely, one who sees the clay will not see these. The housewife who goes to the pottery is taken up with the form, the colour and the ornamentation of the pots ; for the moment she is unaware of the clay which is their basis. The potter, however, is indifferent to the form, colour etc. and knows that the substance in all cases is only clay. It is even like one who sees the snake not seeing the rope, and one who sees the rope not seeing the snake. The status of the universe is like the status of the snake to a deluded mind. The 'reality' behind the things of the world is the same and common to them all. The objects are so many forms in which that 'reality' appears to us. These appearances are invested with a form and name. These, the form and the name do not endure. But what abides through all their transformations is that which is their underlying substance of which they are the transformations. For example, it is the same substance, iron which gets transformed and appears as the knife, the scissors and the nail puller etc. These latter may get broken, but the iron in them persists.

Jagat—Mithyā

Advaita Vedānta says that the several objects of the universe are not real in the sense that their

underlying substance called Brahman is real. The objects are not unreal; because they *appear*. What is unreal like a square-circle cannot appear. But they are not real like Brahman; for, after a time their particular forms disappear. The real, let it be repeated, will not disappear and the unreal cannot appear. The world and its objects therefore are forms in which Brahman, the Supreme Reality *appears*. Though they appear and *because they appear*, the objects are not to be said to be real. Like the snake which frightened the deluded man or the lustre of the mother of pearl which attracted him, they are *mithyā*.

This concept of *mithyā* has a special implication. In the case of the *mithyā* snake, the snake does not appear on a vacant spot. There must be a rope on the ground which is wrongly seen as a snake. The deluded man as it were, 'imposes' the snake on the 'this'. He points to something somewhere and says '*this* is a snake; *idam sarpam*. The *idam* (this) is the basis of the wrong preception. In Vedānta, this 'basis' is called the *adhistāna*; the imposed snake is called *āropita* and the imposing is called *adhyāsa*. It is the imposition of a thing on (super-imposition) what is not that thing (*atasmin tad buddhih*). The

wrong preception of the mithyā snake is due to *adhyāsa* or superimposition of the snake on the 'this' effected by the man's defective understanding or *ajñāna* respecting the object. It is removed by correct knowledge or *samyakjñāna*. Then the super-imposed snake vanishes and the 'this' is seen in its true nature as the rope.

Even so, for all the objects of the universe, their common basis or *adhistāna* is the ultimate Reality called Brahman. The ordinary man does not see that Reality, but sees only its appearances to him by reason of his *ajñāna* even as the frightened man saw the 'snake' due to his *ajñāna*. He mistakes the appearances for the reality. All his life-activities are based on the belief that the things of the world are everlastingly real. But they have only the same kind of reality as the reflection of an object in the mirror. For purpose of our toilet, we believe that the reflection is real, over there *in* the mirror. Even so, for our life purposes, that is, for the practical concerns of life, we do and must believe that the objects of the world are 'real' as they appear. The first is called *prātibhāsika* or reflectional reality; the second is called *vyāvahārika* or experiential or empirical reality. The first is private to each man

looking at a mirror; the second is common to all persons going through their lives. It is, however, realised that the *prātibhāsika* 'real' is not a *vyāvahārika* real; it is a *vyāvahārika* appearance. The appearances, that is, the objects in the reflection are all *prātibhāsika*; for you cannot speak to a man's reflection in a mirror. To speak to him, you want the man himself. You cannot eat the reflection of an orange; you want the solid orange, the *vyāvahārika* reality.

Brahman—Adhistāna of the world

Ultimate Reality or Brahman is back of the experiential objects of the world as their substratum; for they are all forms in which it appears. It is their *adhistāna*. As in the *vyāvahārika* realm the rope abides even though the snake disappears on the dawn of *samyakjñāna*, even so, when true *jñāna* arises in the mind about the nature of the world objects by instruction by one who knows and by study of scripture, the world-consciousness disappears and the Reality or Brahman-consciousness arises. One who has attained this Reality-consciousness will not see the objects as disparate, but only as the Ultimate Reality. The case is analogous to that of a goldsmith who in his smithy does not see the ear-ring, or finger-ring or bangle

or necklace *as such* but sees them all only *as gold.*

This world-consciousness is consciousness of difference between things, of taking such difference to be ultimate and believing that the multitude and variety of things are also ultimate. Reality-consciousness is the opposite of this plurality consciousness. It is seeing the manifold of the world as so many forms of the one identical ultimate Reality underlying them all; that is, seeing that Reality *in* all things, and all things *as* that Reality.

This awareness transcends experiential perception of multiplicity. And so, it is a transcendental or *pāramārthikā* consciousness arising from true knowledge of the real nature of things.

Thus, in Advaita, there are three orders of 'reality' *(sattātraya),* the *prātibhāsika* or the reflectional, the *vyāvahārikā* or the experiential and the *pāramārthikā* or the transcendental. The reflection in the mirror, and the snake appearance of the rope are examples of the *prātibhāsikā* existence or *satta.* The experience of world objects in daily life is the result of their *vyāvahārikā sattā* and the transcendental consciousness which sees everything as ultimate Reality *pāramrtthika satta.*

Even as one knows in practical life that the reflection in the mirror is not real, so too the man of transcendent wisdom, the *jñāni*, realises that the objects of the world *as such* are not real. Even as the *prātibhāsikā* is sublated in the *vyāvahārikā*, so too is the *vyāvahārika* sublated in the *pāramārthika* state. The *prātibhāsīka* is private to each person, the *vyāvahārika* is common to all men and the *pārmārthika* is peculiar to the jñāni alone.

But till one gets the supreme consciousness, to him the world is real in a full measure and one must act in that belief. It is the *jñāni* alone who has the qualification and the right to say that the world is *mithyā* and act on that conviction, not he who is still subject to the *ajñana* that projects the world before him in name and form and makes them appear to him as if different in essence and as distinct in form.

Mithyā not illusion

From the foregoing, it will be clear that it is incorrect to say that according to Advaita the world is an illusion. The Advaitin is not an illusionist. He only says that to one who has acquired the transcendental wisdom by means of which as will be explained later, he attains to the non-dualistic experience, the world of distinctions will

be puerile and meaningless. If, for a moment, gold is personified and if it is asked: what are these, the ring, the bracelet, chain and bangles?, it will reply, 'they are different appearances of myself; they have no individuality apart from me; I am the stuff of their being'. Even so, all the objects of the experiential world are of the stuff of Supreme Reality and their seeming individuality is due to the conditioning of that identical stuff in particular diverse moulds and forms. These differentiating moulds are called limitations of the Supreme Reality, its *upādhis*. The uninstructed man, the man without proper insight looks upon the objects as independent of one another and as real in thier supposed independence. So, he reacts differently to different objects, attracted by some and repelled by others, like a woman who likes one form of bangle and dislikes another. But the man with true insight sees them all as being of one identical substance and has no preferences for some and prejudices against others. Nothing is *priya* or *apriya* to him. In the language of theism it is seeing One God in all things and creatures, that all are expressions of one identieal Supreme Being. That is *Advaitatattva* which sees not difference, but identity everywhere.

Such a man who understands the identity also sees the variety of objects ; but he knows that they are not different in essence from one another, that their variety is due to superficial differences which have no reality. Yet, so long as he has to live in the world and go through its practical concerns, he acts on the basis of their *vyāvahāriaka sattā*, but with the consciousness that their *sattā* is only *vyāvahārikā*, pragmatic and not ultimate or *pāramarthikā*.

Origin of the Universe

Not a Creation or Evolution

This leads to the much discussed question of the origin of the universe. According to the theists, the universe is a creation of God. The scientist advances the theory of natural evolution. There are difficulties in both views. The creationist view cannot satisfactorily answer the questions: Out of what did God create the universe? Did that original substance exist before creation and, if so, how? Why should God have created the world? Did He have a purpose and if so what? How to account for the inequalities of life on the theory of creation without attributing incapacity or partiality to God? etc. And again, in regard to the material out of which God created the world, did it exist out-

side of Him? In that case, how did it come to be? Was it the same as He? Then, in creating, did God as the creator transform Himself as the material? Did he transform only a part or the whole of Himself? In the former case, He would suffer a division, and in the latter, annihilation. All this will disrupt the oneness or damage the majesty of God. The evolutionist cannot satisfactorily explain the transition from the inanimate to the animate, from the animal to the human levels. His theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest undermines all considerations of ethics. He is intersted only in the *process* and does not envisage a *purpose*.

World—Vivarta of Brahman

According to Advaita, the universe is not said to be *created*. It is only a way in which Ultimate Reality *appears* under the conditions of Space and Time and other limiting adjuncts. The universe is only an *appearance* of the supreme Reality. At bottom its substance is that Reality; it is a projection of that Reality at particular points with distinct forms and invested with special names, and thus, it provides the theatre for our experience. On analysis, the objects of the universe will be found to lose their particular distinctions of name

and form and get resolved into their substratum that is the Ultimate Reality. This view of the universe called *vivaratavāda* emphasises the fact that the world is the way in which the Supreme Reality appears to the mind by reason of the mind's *ajñāna* of the world's foundational character in that Reality.

This is of a piece with the phenomenon of the rope appearing as a snake to a man subject to ajñāna. The snake is not a fresh creation; it is only what subsists in one form appearing differently. Even so, what is, is only the Supreme Reality which in essence is devoid of form and name. But it appears to the man of incorrect understanding as if extended as objects of the universe. Upon the understanding of their true nature, consciousness of the multiplicity of the world will be substituted by the experience of the One Reality. The universe, therefore, is not a *de novo creation*, nor is it a *transformation* of something. But it is the *appearance* of the Ultimate Reality under conditions of worldly experience. Like every appearance, the world too is not real; because to the enlightened man, it ceases to exist in its multiplicity and diversity. And, it is not unreal; for it appears to the senses. So, being neither real, nor

unreal, it can only be said to be *not-real* or *mithyā*; it is said to be *sadasadvilakṣaṇam*

VIVARTAVĀDA

The category of Cause

Ordinarily, two things or events are said to be in causal relation when one of them produces or brings about the other. The one which produces is called the cause, and what is produced is known as the effect. The cause is believed to be different from the effect and anterior to it. According to some, the effect comes to be on the termination of the cause, while others hold that the cause continues and persists in the effect. On the view that God is said to be the cause of the world, He is the creator, and the world is His creation to which He is transcendent or in which He is immanent or both.

There is also another element in the causal activity. In any process of production of an object, three elements are involved, namely the material, the instrument and the operation or operator. Each of these is said to be an aspect of the cause. Taking the making of a pot, the clay is its material cause, the wheel and the stick are the instrumental cause and the potter and his

skill are the efficient cause. A combination of these in a particular manner brings about the pot. This is from the practical point of view of the phenomenal world.

Criticism of Causation

But philosophically speaking, Advaita Vedānta maintains that the category of causation is riddled with inconsistencies, and that, from an ultimate point of view, there is no such thing as one event *causing* another. In other philosophical schools, two views of causation are maintained. One is called *asatkāryavāda* and the other is *satkāryavāda*.

Taking the asatkārya vāda first, which is also called *ārambhavāda*, according to it, the effect is a *new production* from the cause. The cause is one thing; the effect is another. In other words, according to this theory which is held by the Nyāya-Vaiseṣika philosophers, the effect is non-existent before its production by the cause. They argue that if the effect is pre-existent, why need it be produced or caused? Causation itself becomes meaningless. The cause operates first and then, as a separate event in time, the effect comes into existence thereafter either immediately or after a time interval.

Arambhavāda vs. Pariṇāmavada

The opposite view is held by the Sānkhyas. Their theory is known as *satkāryavāda*, that the effect is not a new origination, but is pre-existent in the cause. The dispute between these two theories has had the effect of nullifying both. The Sānkhyas ask: If the effect is not pre-existent in the cause, then anything can come out of anything. There cannot be a determinate cause for a specific effect. Oil may come out of sand, and milk out of sesamum. And there cannot be the rule that everytime the same effect must come from the same cause. Therefore, the effect must pre-exist in the cause. To this the Nyāya-Vaiseṣika philosophers object and say: In that case, i.e., if the effect pre-exists in the cause, why need it be produced? It is already there. The Sānkhyas reply: The effect is not in the cause as such; but it is only latent in it. It has to be brought out; or, the effect is a transformation of the cause so that what is latent in it becomes patent. This is called *pariṇāma vāda* or the theory of transformation. Upon this, the Nyāya theorists ask: Is the whole cause transformed into the effect, or only a part of it? In the former case, will not the cause cease to be? What happens to the cause in which the effect is said to *pre-exist?* If only a part of the

cause becomes the effect, the other part retaining its substance, it will be an attempt to eat the cake and have it too; or, to adopt the classical illustration, it will be like killing one half of a hen to eat it, and trying to retain the other half to lay eggs.

The Sānkhyas reply: When the cause is said to be transformed into the effect, what is meant is that what was not manifested previously is now made manifest. The pot is the manifestation of the clay in which it pre-existed. The cause, they say, does not disappear when the effect is produced. It persists in it. What *was* the cause is *now* the effect.

But what does this 'manifestation' mean? ask the Nyāyā theorists? If, by causation what is unmanifest is made manifest, what is the relevance here of the act of manifestation which is an ingredient of the causal process? Was the manifestation itself pre-existent or no? In the former case, there is no need for fresh manifestation and no causation can arise. In the latter case, as the *asat* cannot come into existence, there can be no manifestation and so no causation. Cause and effect cannot be identical, as in that case the *distinction* between the two will be meaningless. Thus the Sānkhya theory of satkārya vāda and the Nyāyā—Vaiseṣika theory

of asatkārya vāda destroy each other and leave the field clear for the Advaita theory of vivartavāda.

Vivarta Vāda

Vivarta Vāda is also a variant of satkārya vāda. It also affirms that the effect pre-exists in the cause in the sense that it is the cause which appears as the effect. In other words, the effect is nothing new; it is only the cause *appearing* differently. To take our classical example, the rope is the cause of the snake in the sense that the snake pre-existed, as it were, in the rope; for it is the rope that appeared as the snake. In other words, in a manner of speaking, the snake was in the rope, it was sustained by the rope and lapsed into the rope. There was nothing else other than the rope; the snake was the rope whose being was concealed by ajñāna and which was projected as tha snake. The rope does not cease to be rope while it appears as the snake. That is vivarta which means *a thing appearing differently without ceasing to be itself even during the different appearance.* The same cannot be said of the satkārya vāda of the Sānkhyas which is really pariṇāma or *total transformation of the original into something else like milk becoming curd.* In the case of vivarta you can go back to the cause from the apparent

effect i.e. to the rope from the snake. But in parināma you cannot go back from the effect to the cause. Once the milk has got transformed into curd, you cannot get the milk again.

The theories of cause according to the different philosophies have important consequences with reference to the world. According to the asatkārya-vāda of the Nyāya-Vaiseṣika philosophers, Īśvara or God is the primal cause of the world which is different in substance from Him and which He creates as the potter creates the pot. The world is a new creation by God. It is His handiwork, the work of a Mastercraftsman who is superlatively intelligent and brings about the myriads of things which make up the phenomenal world. He creates the world, sustains it and ultimately destroys it. Srṣti, sthiti and samhāra are His acts with reference to the world.

The difficulty about the creatorship of God relates to the material out of which He fashioned the world. In the case of the pot, the clay which is the potter's material is independent of him, is outside of him and pre-exists both the pot and the process of making it. What is the material out of which God makes the world? If it is independent and outside of Him what about

the status of God and this material? How are they related? It cannot be said that God created without a material out of vacuum. That is against all laws of the phenomenal world.

The theory of pariṇāma or transformation according to which primordial matter or prakṛti gets transformed into the world has to answer the question how an unintelligent entity that *prakṛti* is can bring about the creation of the world which obviously implies an intelligent mind. Knowledge is necessary for the creation of the world and it is a characteristic of the predominance of satva guṇa. But in pradhāna or prakṛti in its original state there is perfect equilibrium among the three guṇas, satva, rajas and tamas and there is no room in it for the origination of knowledge by the preponderance of satvaguṇa. Non-intelligent pradhāna cannot bring about a modification of pradhāna to start the world-process.

To Advaita Vedānta, on the other hand, the phenomenal word is not a creation or an evolution or a transformation. The creation and evoluation theories posit substantiality and final reality to the things of the world. Not only are they said to exist; they are also said to be true *as they exist.* Advaita Vedānta says that what is real is

Brahman only which is formless, qualitiless, actionless, nameless. It is the supreme Reality of pure intelligence (in the sense of not being confronted by an object) and superlative bliss. That is the Real and the True, the *sat* and the *satya*. It is also the unchanging eternal, nitya. Māyā or nescience (ajñāna) being superimposed on this Reality, conceals i and makes it appear as the different myriad objects of the world variegated in form, colour and name. The objects appear as such so long as the dynamics of māyā functions. But upon the dawn of Brahmajñāna, the plurality-consciousness disappears leading to the cognition of the one Absolute Reality. So, the cause of the world, if one may speak of a cause in the conventional sense, is the *vivarta* of Brahman which is unitary, but appears multiple; which has no form, but appears in myriad forms; which has no qualities, but seems to have infinite qualities; which is actionless, but seems to exhibit activity. *Srṣti*, *sthiti* and *samhāra (laya)* are to be interpreted respectively as projection (after prior concealment) of the world from Brahman, its sustenance by its adhiṣṭāna or substratum of Brahman, and its disappearance back into Brahman when the world-consciousness is replaced by Brahman-consciousness.

Theologically speaking, nirguṇa Brahman in association with Māyā is spoken of as saguṇa Brahman or Īśvara. This Īśvara creates the world, sustains it and destroys it at the end. He is both the material and the instrumental cause of the world as creator (abhinnanimittopadānakāraṇa), as there is nothing else outside of Him. Like the spider putting out the threads out of its mouth, weaving a web and ultimately withdrawing them into itself, God creates the world out of Himself, abides *in* it and *as* it, and withdraws it into Himself. As the creator, He is transcendent and as constituting it as its essence, He is immanent in it. He is *in* the world and *as* the world. This is the theological aspect of causation from the point of view of the saguṇa Brahman. Philosophically speaking there is no causation.

Vivartavāda of Advaita is spoken of as Ajātavāda as expounded by Sri Gaudapāda in his *Māndūkyakārika*. It is only on a theistic or deistic religious philosophy that the idea of production or creation has meaning. One has to postulate a God as the creator etc. of the universe. On the Advaitic standpoint there is no Creator in the ultimate sense. The Supreme Brahman being actionless cannot be said to create. The universe

is an *appearance* of Brahman and not a creation. On the creationist idea, the universe which is created must be *different* from its creator. According to Advaita, the universe is not a *jāta*, born or produced; it is only a vikāra of Brahman appearing through avidyā. As such, the universe has no existence or reality apart from Brahman. It is not other than Brahman: *sarvamkhalu idam brahman*: *idam* whatever can be perceived by the senses and pointed out as *this* i.e. the entire phenomenal world is Brahman only.

II. MAN

Meaning of ātman

The view of Man according to Advaita Vedānta is distinct and unique. Every man refers to himself (his self) as the 'I'. What is this 'I' or the self of man? A little reflection will show that a man's body is not his self: for, he does not cease to speak of himself referring to it as 'I' if any limb is cut off.[1] Moreover, each one refers to his body as '*my* body'. The expression 'my' body is analogous to 'my' house, 'my' garden, 'my' motor car etc. No man in his senses will speak of his house, garden or motor car as his self. They are what *belong to him;* but they are not *he.* Anything which is referred to as 'my' cannot be 'I'. So my physical body or *deha* is not 'I'. The same is true of my breath or *prāṇa,* my mind or *manas,* my intellect or *buddhi* and even of *my* ego or *ahaṁkārā.* Hence the real 'I' of every man, his true self which in Vedāntic language is called the *ātman* is not any of these things associated with him and which he calls 'my'. It is what is

1. Modern surgery cuts off parts of the body and puts into it organs taken from other bodies. This will not effect a diminution of the 'I' or addition to it.

behind all these, in the man's innermost being. These other things, from the ego to the body all function outward; but man's true self is deep down in his recesses and is seated inside. It can be apprehended only when a man looks into himself freed from all external diversions and enticements. It is therefore called the *pratyagātman*. i. e. the ātman whose existence is understood only by turning one's vision inward (*pratyak*).

The Pratiyagātman

What is the nature of this *pratyagātman* inside each man? It has no physical features which can be grasped by the senses. Not being a physical object, physical determinants do not apply to it. It cannot be acted upon, nor can it react like other physical objects; i. e. it can not be hurt, burnt, wetted, dried or killed. Residing in us, what does it do? It is that by which conscious experience of the world becomes possible. The sense-organs are only inert physical objects. They themselves do not see, hear, smell etc. There is something back of them which makes them function in their particular ways. So, the ātman is that by which the eye sees, the ear hears, the nose smells etc. That which invests the sense-organs with their cognising power, the

capacity to be conscious, cannot itself stand in need of those organs. So, the ātman is that by which they eye sees, but which does not see by the eye; by which the ear hears, but which does not hear by the ear etc. It is the light of consciousness going out to the outside world through the senses and making for awareness of external objects. It is, unborn and so, not subject to change, it is eternal ancient (*ajonityassāśvatoyam purāṇah)*

The Kūtastha

The bodily organs enveloping it and other functions may change, but like the anvil in the smithy, the ātman remains firm (*kūtastha*) for ever. If the objects of the world are the 'known', the ātman is the 'knower' or the *vijñātā*. All things are known by it; but it itself cannot be known by any of the organs of knowledge. The knower of knowing cannot be known. *vijnātāram are kena vijānīyāt*. That is, it is the permanent 'subject'. of knowledge, not its object. It is the light of knowing resident in man, his pure consciousness or *cit*. When it envelopes an external object, going out, as it were, through the ego or the *antahkaraṇa* and the senses of man, the antahkarana gets fashioned into the form of an object and the object is said to be perceived.

Where does this ātman reside in a man? It is omnipresent in a man's being. If it should be said to reside in a particular part of man, it must be of a limited size. In fact, the ātman has no specific size, nor has it a determinate *locale* in the body. The reason is that ātman is not a physical object subject to restriction of size. It is expansive, *vibhu*, and as will be seen in the sequel, it is co-terminus with the Supreme Reality. Being the intelligence or *cit* which makes knowledge possible, it is all-pervasive. It abides for ever; it is *sat*, pure existence in its primary nature, unassociated with material objects which are the cause of passing pleasures and pains. So, it is pure existence, pure intelligence and pure bliss.

B. AVASTHĀTRAYĀ

An approach to the nature of the ātman is made on the basis of the states of consciousness. Ordinarily, we consider our lives to be taken up with our waking condition. We do not attach any importance to sleep and dream states. They are reckoned as durations lost to the sum total of our lives. Western psychology deals mostly with the waking state and incidentally with dreams as explaining the abnormalities of waking life.

In Vedānta, particularly in Advaita Vedānta, all the three states, waking, dream and dreamless sleep states are considered in addition to a fourth which will be referred to later. These three states are respectively known as *jāgrat*, *swapna* and *suṣupti*.

Jāgrat

The jāgrat is the ordinary waking state of a man when he is conscious of his own body, his environment including the ideas of the things and events that he has experienced and stored in his memory, and also whatever he imagines. This corresponds to the ordinary consciousness that western psychology analyses and studies. In Vedāntic language, this is called the *Vais'vānara* or physical condition in which one is conscious of the world and its contents.

In the waking state a man's awareness extends outside. He is said to be *bahihprajña* operating through his five organs of understanding the *jñānendriyas*, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin; the five organs of action the *karmendriyas* speech, hands, feet, the anus and generative organ; the five aspects of the vital airs, *prāṇa*, *vyāna*, *apāna*, *udāna* and *samāna* and

the four aspects of the cogitating ego or *manas*, *chitta*, *buddhi* and *antahkaraṇa*. It is by these that a person goes through the processes of experience, receiving stimuli from the external world and reacting to them in diverse ways.

Swapna

Then comes the dream state when a person is asleep. This is not an unconscious state. Consciousness functions in this condition; only it is not externally manifested. During a dream, one is said to be *antahprajña*. He is inwardly cognitive. The state is called *taijasā*. In contrast with the waking state when the mind is in contact with gross physical objects, in the dream, the dreamer experiences subtle objects which are creations of the mind. The dream world is as real to the dreamer as the outside world is to the man who is awake. In fact even to the dreamer, the dream world appears to be "outside" his mind.

Suṣupti

The third is the state of dreamless sleep. In this condition a person is like one dead to the world. In fact, it is known metaphorically as daily death (*dainandina maraṇam*). The sleeper is aware neither of the gross objects which he experiences in his waking state nor of the subtle objects of

which he has dream-experience. He has neither external awareness (*bahirprajñā*) nor internal awareness (*antahprajña*). He is completely withdrawn into himself; he has become one with himself (*ekībhūta*). The Sanskrit word for 'sleeps' is *svapiti* which is split into *svam apīti*, i.e. has attained or is immersed in one's own self. Such a person's consciousness is not diversified as in waking or dream; but it is unified consciousness. Such a state is called *prājña*.

Another peculiarity of the dreamless sleep (suṣupti) state is that it is characterised by the absence of any emotional content. No physical pleasure or pain is associated with it as in waking or dream. Even in a dream, the dreamer has pleasure and pain consciousness, and he experiences all the feelings and emotions that his psyche is prone to. But dreamless sleep is a state of freedom from physical pleasures and pains and mental feelings. It is a mental condition of peace and happiness which is *sui generis*, i.e. not to be traced to any object or situation. It is said to be *ānandamaya*, not *qualified* by joy, but *compacted* of it. This joy is a matter of personal experienee. For, when a man comes out of such dreamless sleep, he feels refreshed, and, waking up, he says 'I slept

happily; I did not know anything (during the sleep)' (*sukham asvāpsam nakiñcidavaidiṣam*).

Here two things have to be noted, The man says that he slept 'happily'. Happiness is a state of the mind. To feel happy, one must be conscious. But deep sleep is a condition of temporary cessation of extra-consciousness with external reference. The man is neither outwardly nor inwardly conscious. How then is he able to say on waking that he slept 'happily', as if he was aware of it? This is by virtue of his consciousness not being impinged upon by any object gross or subtle. In fact, this happiness is a sort of negative condition of being unaffected by anything experienced as external to the mind, as waking life objects or dream objects.

Secondly, it may be asked if there is not a break in the consciousness of the individual between the time when he lapsed into sleep and the time he woke up from it? If the intervening state during sleep has been devoid of *bahirprajña* and *antahprajña*, how is the man entitled to say 'I slept well' as if the one who went to sleep and the one who woke from it were the same person? How can there by identity of personality? In this context, Vedānta psychology uses the word *pratyabhijña* or recognition of identity. It is of the

form: I who lapsed into sleep and I who woke from sleep, both are identical with the individual who was asleep. 'I am he' (*soham*) Even as when a person feels his personal identity through his infancy, childhood, boyhood, youth, manhood and old age, so too does a man get awareness of his personal identity about what he was before, during and after sleep. This shows that the state of sleep is not one of mental vacuum; but that consciousness functions in it as indicated by the fact of *pratyabhijña*. It is a state of unalloyed simple consciousness unaffected by experiences. It is therefore *prajñana ghana*, consciousness whole and entire, like sugarcandy compacted of sweetness all over.

Moreover, suṣupti condition is said to be the gateway to cognition (*cetomukha*). From a blissful non-awareness of things and events in sleep, one either wakes up to gradually and eventually to full consciousness of the external world, or passes to experience of objects and events in a dream. On the one hand, one goes into dreamless sleep from waking and dream, and on the other, one lapses from sleep into either of these states. Hence it is called the gateway of consciousness, alike to its entrance and to its exit.

Suṣupti being cetomukha brings out another feature about the consciousness or prājña characteristic of it. According to Advaita Vedānta, Reality is one only while the manifold of the experiental world is only an appearance wrought by the power of māyā. Suṣupti consciousness is not of the nature of the pure cit that is of the essence of ultimate Reality or Brahman. It contains in its womb as it were in a latent state the subtle objects of the dream world and the gross objects of the waking world. These sets of objects are projected out of it and such projection will be possible only if the projecting agency or māyā is present in suṣupti. In dreamless sleep the experiences of objects and events of the waking and dream states merge in it. They are not destroyed. They are latent in it, in a unitary condition (*ekībhutah*), to become manifested in their diverse particularities in the the dream or in the waking life as the case may be.

In fine, suṣupti is characterised by non-awareness of particular experiences of anything, by a complete withdrawal of consciousnes from them, unffected by pain or pleasure from an external source or from those originating in the mind, where one is, as it were, one with oneself. There

is a peace abiding in it and a consequent happiness of not merely a negative condition (*duhkha abhāva*) but symptomatic also of a positive joy. This joy signified by the word *sukham* in *sukhamasvāpsam* is of a quiescent kind.

The Turīya

Beyond *suṣupti,* both quantitatively and qualitatively different from it, is the bliss of *samādhi* which is called the *turīya* state. Though literally turīya means the fourth, it is not to be understood as in any sense numerically different. For example, when speaking of a coin from the first quarter to the last, with the first quarter, we say one quarter of the rupee, with the second we say half of the rupee, with the third quarter we say three quarters of the rupee. But when we come to the last quarter of it, we do not speak in terms of 'quarter'; but we say One or whole Rupee. Even so, the turīya is a comprehensive whole and it is not to be expressed in terms of the fourth of the four fractions.

There are two differences between suṣupti and and the turīya states. The former is characterised by sleep; the latter by wakefulness. The person in samādhi is 'awake to Brahman'; in suṣupti one is simply oblivious of the world, physically and

mentally. There is no Brahman-consciousness in it. In samādhi too on the other hand there is no world-consciousness. In it, in addition to being dead to the world, one wakes up to Brahman and lives in Brahman, to put it more truly *as* Brahman. This is because, and that brings us to the second difference, suṣupti is engulfed by māyā which invests the mind with the power to project experiential objects. In turīya one transcends māyā and is alone in and as Brahman. Hence the turīya state is not inwardly cognitive, externally cognitive or cognitive both ways. For cognition takes place in a three-in-one predicament, *triputi* of knower, known and knowledge. Turīya transcends all distinctions. It is of the nature of the pure subject without an object to cognise. It is objectless subject. It is compacted of cognition pure and simple where all differences disappear in a unitive integral consciousness. It is a condition of *being*, not of *knowing*.

Sāksicaitanya

A peculiar feature of these four states of consciousness jāgrat, svapna, suṣupti and turīya deserves to be noted, The first three are exclusive of one another. When one is awake, one is neither dreaming nor asleep. When a person is going

through a dream, he is not awake nor is he fast asleep. In the sleep condition, there is neither dream nor wakefulness. Not so turīya. Like the fourth quarter of a coin which gives fullness of individuality and value to the rest of it, and to the coin as a whole, the turīya state is the undercurrent of the rest. Awake by day, going to sleep by night and experiencing a dream in the midst of his sleep the same person exclaims: I am awake now, I slept last night and I had a dream. This sense of 'I' is continuous with all these three states, even though, as was pointed out earlier, jāgrat, swapna and suṣupti are exclusive of one another. By what is this personal identity established in the three states referring them all to the same individual? This 'I' common to the three states bears witness to waking-life experiences, to the dream events and by virtue of the pratyabhijñā referred to earlier, to the persistence of consciousness in dreamless sleep. This awareness which underlies them all is said to be '*the witnessing consciousness*' or as it is called *sākṣicaitanya*. This *sakṣicaitanya* is omnipresent in our consciousness, pervades the turīya, the suṣupti, the svapna and jāgrat states. It makes for the sense of self-identity. The *sākṣī* is present in all the states as

their common denominator. It is not one of the states like the other three states. It runs through them all.

Turīya is a non-dual condition without subject-object distinction. It is made up of an experience of oneness. It is expansive consciousness (*bhūmā*). As there is no second beside it, it does not make for either fear or sorrow. It is the joy of the Alone, pure unalloyed absolute Joy. It is that of which the upaniṣads say *śāntam, śivam advaitam*.. While the other three states are temporary and transient, the turīya is the ever-present abiding consciousness. When once that becomes a fact of actual experience as in samādhi, one abides in it for ever, except when one issues out of it into the jāgrat condition and becomes externally conscious or *bahirmukha* or extrovert making excursions into the vyāvahārika world.

If the jāgrat and the svapna states are not ultimate and are to be transcended by turīya, it must follow that the plurality behind the experiences of these states is not the final truth. Similarly if the stillness of suṣupti gives a foretaste, however feeble, of the abiding peace and bliss of turīya, it means that ultimate Reality is of a nature that transcends these states, that it

passeth understanding and that it is plenary bliss which defies description. It is not a void as in sleep; nor is it mind-oriented as in jāgrat and swapna, but it is constituted by a totality of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss which have a positive content of superlative abundance (*prācurya*). It follows from the death of the mind and the liquidation of the world (*manonāsa* and *prapancopaśamana*).

Waking and Dream States Compared

The proposition that the experiential world of waking life is but an appearance and that it does not possess reality in the ultimate sense is confirmed by an examination of the relative validity of the jāgrat and swapna states. Ordinarily we believe that dream experiences are not real and that waking life experiences are real. We call dreams false. Why? Because they disappear when the dreamer awakes. But what is the criterion by which we judge dreams to be false? Because dream objects do not persist on waking from the dream.

Now reverse the process. Are waking life objects seen in a dream? No. A man goes to sleep after a full meal, but soon dreams he is hungry. So waking-life objects do not persist in the dream

life. If, by waking-life criterion dreams are false, by the same token, by the dream-criterion waking life must be false. Waking life too, though of longer duration, is as impermanent as a dream. If dreams are not real, waking life too is not real. Neither of them satisfies the test of reality, *trikāla abādhyatva*, i.e. not being sublated in any of the three periods of time. And, both the waking ego, and the dream ego, both disappear in dreamless sleep. Dreamless sleep too is either disrupted by dream or waking or disappears in samādhi where a person is eternally awake to the Supreme Reality. So, none of these states, jāgrat, swapna and suṣupti can intimate the nature of Reality.

It may be objected that waking life is truer than dream and that the two are not on a par with each other. Let us consider. It may be said that in dream there is no actual physical object which we cognise; but in waking life there is a physical object. How do you know there is a table or ball in waking life? Your information is by the Interpretation of sense impressions. You have the same kind of sense impressions in a dream. The feeling that there is an object external to oneself is common both to waking and to dream life.

You may say there is a community of experiences among waking people. In dreams too many

people appear; they talk to each other and to the dreamer, and so, there is a like common experience.

But, it may be urged, dream objects last only for a short time; waking life is of longer duration. But while dreaming, do we not go through years of experience? You cannot measure dream time by the standard of waking life.

But dream objects are not real. Water in a dream will not quench your thirst, money seen in it cannot make you rich. Here again is a misapplication of standards. Dream-water can quench dream-thirst and the dream-money can convert the dreaming pauper into a rich man during the dream. *Per contra,* waking life water cannot quench dream thirst, nor can money in his box make the dreaming 'pauper' feel that he is rich. Each is false by the standard of the other.

Thus, on careful analysis, it will be seen that it is difficult to say which is real, the waking state or the dream state. In this connection one fs reminded of what Descartes says in his *Meditations*:

> 'When I consider the matter carefully, I do not find a single characteristic by means of which I can certainly determine whether I am awake or whether I am dreaming. The

visions of a dream and the experiences of my waking state are so much alike that I am completely puzzled and I do not really know if I am not dreaming at this moment.'

So also says Pascal:

If a dream comes to us every night we should be as much occupied with it as by the thing we see every day, and if an artisan were certain that he would dream every night for full twelve hours that he was a king, then he would be just as happy as a king who dreams every night for twelve hours that he is an artisan.'

In tune with the above observation of Pascal is a parable of Sri Ramakrishna. A hunter lived in a forest with his wife and son. One day the son died and the wife set up a loud wailing while the hunter sat unmoved. The wife was dismayed at her husband's behaviour and charged him with lack of affection for their child. The hunter replied: 'Dear wife! For some days past I have been dreaming that we had six children and were living happily with them. Last night I dreamt that all of them were killed. You lost the child you reared by day while you were awake. I lost the children I reared by night while I slept. Now

tell me; do I not have more cause to weep for the six children I lost than you have to wail over the single child that you lost?' Though a parable, this brings out forcibly what little difference there is between waking and dreaming, and that, by the standard of reality, both are equally *asatya*.

The foregoing analysis of the states of consciousness only confirms the Advaita Vedānta view that the world of experience does not have absolute and ultimate reality. 'What exists is one only without a second', says the upaniṣad. That means that the manifold of experiential objects diversified in name and form is not real *as it appears*. It is only a projection of the mind in the world of Space, Time and Causation of what is fundamentally and foundationally One having neither name nor form. neither parts or qualities, neither acting nor enjoying. Even as the objects seen in a dream are projections of the mind depending on its accumulated tendencies or vāsanas, so too are the objects of waking experience. It is no argument to plead that the things of world are seen outside of us. Dream objects also are seen to 'exist outside'; on that account they are not said to be real. The same is the case with the world of experience. But it must however be remembered that the 'existence'

of the world of objects is not denied. Advaita Vedānta does not say that the physical world is illusory. It only says that it is not real in the sense that Brahman is real. The Advaitin is a phenomenal realist, but a transcendental idealist. Considering the world an appearance does not detract from the Advaitin's dealing with it in the same way as the followers of other schools of Vedānta. But, he does so with the knowledge of its status as an appearance.

When a person has reached the turīya stage and lives continuously in the claimate of Brahman-consciousness, he enjoys a bliss which passeth understanding and defies description. Such as person is called a *jīvanmukta*. He is loath to come back to world-consciousness. That is what the poet put into the saint Nanda's mouth when he made him say 'Will those who have gone to Chidambaram ever come back again?'—Chidambaram meaning the beatific vision and experience of the Supreme. But if and when they return to world-consciousness, it is a case of 'as if': they appear to go through the concerns of life, but their spiritual being is anchored in the Supreme.

IV. BRAHMAN

Sacchidānanda

In Vedānta, the supreme ultimate Reality is known as *Brahman*. It is of the nature of Existence, Intelligence and Bliss (*sat cit ānanda*) which are absolute, that is, not contingent on anything else. It is plenary Existence, plenary Intelligence and plenary Bliss. These, Existence, Intelligence and Bliss are also primal in the sense that these features of the men and objects of the phenomenal world are all derived from Brahman and are only its reflections in the world of experience. These are not *attributes* of Brahman in the sense Brahman is spoken of as being *qualified* by them. It is not as if Brahman *has* Existence, Intelligence and Bliss as its guṇas. According to the Advaita, Brahman *is* these aspects. It is compacted of them whole and entire as sugarcandy is sweetness all over. Sweetness cannot be separated in thought or reality from the sugarcandy. There is no candy *independent* of the sugar and *qualified* by it. In fact, it is even wrong to enumerate sat, cit and ananda as if they are different. Sat, Cit and Ananda are all one in substance.

The purpose of saying that Brahman is Existence, Intelligence and Bliss is to distinguish Brahman from what are not Brahman, from things which are not-existent; not-intelligent and not-blissful i.e. from whatever is *asat*, *acit* and *not-ānanda*. These features, *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* are to be understood as negating their opposites in respect of their constituting Brahman.

Parokṣa and Aparokṣa Jñāna

The nature of Brahman is to be known indirectly from the declarations of scripture and it is a matter of direct experience to the jñāni. The former is called *parokṣajñāna*, the latter is *aparokṣa-jñāna*. In the last resort, Brahman is known by realisation (*anubhavaika vedyam*). The usual means of knowledge of things, namely sense-perception, inference, analogy etc., cannot give us this knowledge. Inference and analogy are based on sense-perception Sense-perception can be had only of physical objects. Brahman is not an *object* of *sense perception*. It is the permanent *subject* and trans-sensuous or *atīndriya*. Therefore one has to depend on scripture or śabdapramāṇa for knowledge of Brahmam. Scripture says: Brahman is one only, without a second. Predication of difference cannot be made of it. It is free from

all difference, *bedarahitam.* Difference is of three kinds. They are (1) difference from an object of the same class (2) difference from an object of another class and (3) internal difference. They are respectively known as *sajātīya, vijātīya,* and *svagatabhedas.* Sajātīya bheda is difference for example between one mango tree and another mango tree. Vijātīya bheda is difference between a mango tree and a neem tree. *Svagatabheda* refers to different parts of the same object like roots, trunk, branches, stalks, leaves etc. of a tree.

Brahman or the ultimate Reality has none of these differences. There is no another Brahman from which it is to be distinguished; it has not sajātīya bheda. There is nothing else other than Brahman, or outside Brahman making for vijātīya bheda. Scripture says: Brahman is *all* this: *sarvamkhalvidam Brahma.* There are no parts in Brahman occasioning svagata bheda. Brahman is one only. There is no multiplicity in it. It has no parts and so, no discreteness of parts.

Brahman has no form because a form is a restriction of an object in space. Since it is the *all* and *everywhere* it cannot have a specific form bounded by physical contours. It has no qualities.

It is *nirguṇa.* For, if it is said that it has a particular quality, say a yellow colour, then it means it is not the other colours. That will be a limitation of Brahmam. That will militate against the allness of Brahman. Brahman is not exclusive of anything; it is inclusive of all. In fact, it is the All. It cannot be said to *possess a quality*; for that will be to differentiate between Brahman which *possesses* the quality and the quality which is *possessed* by it, and that will introduce a difference in Brahman. Brahman is also actionless *niṣkriyam.* For, action is intended for the fulfilment of a desire. As Brahman is perfect, the whole, there can be nothing which will be deficient in it. It can have no desire and in the absence of desire, there will be no occasion for action by Brahman.

Moreover, action will be for one of four purposes, namely, to go to another place, to attain some object, to effect a transformation or to purify something. As Brahman is all and everywhere, there can be no going to anywhere. As it is the All there is nothing outside it for it to attain. As it is the permanent substratum of the universe, it can undergo no change. Being the ultimate Reality, it is perfect and pure, and so does not

stand in need of any purification. Brahman being the All, it is the infinitesemally minute and the infinitely mighty. It is far for the *ajñāni*, yet near for the realised one. It is the stuff of everything in the universe, the inner core and essence of all that of which all objects, living and lifeless are manifestations or appearances. And, when it is said Brahman is the stuff of everything, it is not that it is anything material. It is as was pointed out earlier, pure Intelligence, objectless Subject. This is what is meant when it is said *prajñānam brahma*; it is intelligence which transcends the trinity of the knower, the known and knowledge. When that Intelligence is 'pressed' as it were in the moulds of the psycho-physical in man, it gets diversified into the knower, the known and knowledge.

This is the Advaita doctrine of *Nirguṇa Brahman*. The Supreme Reality which is also the ultimate Truth of the Universe is infinite, a principle underlying and activiting every part and particle of the universe. It cannot be finitised into the form of a person. As every determination is a negation in the sense that, to associate any particular quality with a thing is to deny the other and complementary qualities of it, nothing can be pre-

dicated of Brahmam. By mental categories, we cannot say what Brahman is; we can only say what it is not (*neti neti*). It is not anything pertaining to the phenomenal, material, experiential world. What is it then? It cannot be determined by the mind which can apprehend only sensuous objects. Brahman cannot be described by speech. For speech can declare only what has been known by the mind. Words can convey ideas pertaining to one or more of the following, namely *class*, as 'he is a man'; *quality*, as 'he is wise'; *action*, as 'he walks'; or *relation*, as 'he is older than I'. Brahman possesses none of these. It belongs to no class, it has no quality, it does no action and enters into no relation. To know Brahman, one must realise it To realise Brahman means being Brahman, i.e. being Brahman-conscious, living in the turīya state, beyond the jāgrat, svapna and suṣupti states of consciousness.

V. MĀYĀ

On the one hand there is Brahman which is One only, which is formless, qualitiless and actionless. On the other, there is the world of perceivable objects diverse in name and form. That is the phenomenal world, the world of the Many. Brahman is One; the world is Many. Brahman is qualitiless, nirguṇa; the objects are qualified by attributes, they are saguṇa. Brahman has no name or form; the objects have different forms and names. Brahman is inactive and parmanent; the objects of the world are ever active and subject to change. What is the link between the two? What is the *modus operandi* of the transition of the One into the Many?

Finitising Principle

This leads to the concept of māyā which is cardinal to Advaita. Māyā is the finitising principle which provides the dynamics of the One appearing as the Many. It is declared: "In the beginning there was the One only without a second." It thought 'May I become Many'. And again: "Indra (that is the Supreme Reality) acquires a number of forms by the power of māyā. As Brahman by itself is inactive, an activating agency must operate on it to make it appear as the Many.

In the rope-snake illustration, the rope lies on the ground inert in itself. The man's ajñāna in conjunction with the limitations of indifferent light and his innate sense to be frightened comes to play on the rope and makes it appear to him as a snake. Similarly when a man mistakes a mother of pearl as silver. The frightened man runs away from the snake; the avaricious one goes towards the seeming silver. All life's actions are based either on aversion or avarice like a cow going towards a man extending a handful of grass to it or running from one who wields a stick. Ajñāna, therefore is the agency of *vivarta*, making the substratum appear differently from what it is causing either joy or sorrow. Even so, to make the nirguṇa and niṣkriya Brahman which is the adhiṣṭāna of the universe appear as the manifold of the objects of the world filled with joy and sorrow, a finitising agency must function, and that is māyā. Ajñāna is individual, making a particular man mistake a rope for a snake. Another man does not commit that mistake. He sees it only as a rope. But in the case of the world, all men see it diversified in name and form except a few rare individuals who see the objects not in their particularity, but like the goldsmith looking at gold ornaments, as so many finite appearances of an underlying Infinite Brahman.

Like the deluded man mistaking the rope for a snake, they also are *all* subject to ajñāna; but it is not individual ajñāna, but universal, cosmic ajñāna which is called māyā. In fact, ajñāna, avidyā, māyā are synonymous.

Māyā makes the One that is Brahman appear as the Many that is the world or jagat. How does it do that? How did the rope seem to be a snake? It was due to the ajñāna of the deluded man. The ajñāna concealed the vyāvahārika reality, the rope, from the man and made him see it as a snake. It first effected a concealment of the rope and simultaneously projected the snake, as it were from out of the rope. Concealment (āvaraṇa) and projection (vikṣepa) are the two complementary effects of the activity of ajñāna. Similarly, from the generality of mankind, Brahman is concealed and the world is projected to them. Upon the dawn of right knowledge (samyakjñāna) the projection is annulled along with the concealment, and the rope is seen as it is. So too, upon attaining Brahmajñāna, the reality behind the manifold of the world is seen as the One unitary Brahman.

Māyā - ānādi

It is not possible to say when the association of māyā with Brahman started. It is as old as the

world and one can never say when the world appearance began. Its origin is beyond our comprehension; for, we are subject to this māyā. The child cannot be present at the birth of its mother, We must transcend māyā to know its origin. This can be done only by *samyakjñāna* or true knowledge of Brahman. When that is attained, māyā is liquidated and there will be no occasion to discuss its origin. Hence māyā is beginningless (*anādi*). No beginning can be postulated for it by us who are bound by it. But though māyā is anādi, it is not *ananta*, without an end. Māyā can be annulled by Bramajñāna which is synonymous with the realisation of Brahman upon which the magic show of the phenomenal world will disappear. Brahman referred to in the neuter gender in nirguṇa; but māyā, which is generally spoken of in the feminine, contains the three guṇas, *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in her womb. The things of the world are compacted of these guṇas in different degrees of their combination. Māyā vests nirguṇa Brahman with these guṇas and starts the world process.

Māyā is the activating agency making for the appearance of Brahman as the world. It pertains to the phenomenalising process. Even as the play of the individual's ajñāna in the rope makes it

appear as a snake, so too the play of māyā (which is cosmic ajñāna) on Brahman makes it appear as the world variegated in name and form. Like the prātibhāsika snake which appears to the deluded man, the vyāvahārika world which is the result of māyā is neither sat or asat, not being real as Brahman or unreal like the horns of a hare. It is *sadasaabhyām vilakṣaṇam.* In this respect it is like *ajñāna* or *avidyā* with which it is synonymous.

A positive entity: bhāva rūpa

Ajñāna is not a negative entity. It is something positive. Some people hold that ajñāna is absences of knowledge (a-jñāna) and is therefore negative. Ajñāna is positive or *bhāvarūpa.* It produces the prātibhāsika and the vyāvahārikā sattas. Ajñāna functions, as was stated earlier in two ways, by concealing the true and projecting the false. These are activities which cannot be performed by something non-existent. Māyā is an existing something, It is a power (śakti) associated with Brahman. It is the measure of the Universe doling out the objects of the phenomenal world from out of Brahman (*mā* means to measure).

Ajñāna is the enemy of the true knowledge (samyakjñāna). Though the cit (of the individual

jīvātman and of the universal Paramātman or Brahman) is self-luminous (*svayam prakās'a*), it is veiled by something and does not shine to the ignorant jīva in its natural glory. That which hides samyakjñāna is different from it. When that goes away like mist hiding the sun, then the cit shines by itself. Though darkness is understood as absence of light, yet we say 'there *is* darkness *here*'. The word *is* can be used only of an existing thing, not of what is absent, of what is not. We also say 'light destroys darkness.' A non-existent cannot be destroyed; darkness must exist to be destroyed. Hence ajñāna is not absence of knowledge (*jñānābhāva*). It is 'something' (*yatkincit*) and positive (*bhāvarūpa*).

Relation to Brahman

The question of the status of māyā and its relation to Brahman has been a subject discussion. Is māyā, it is asked, independent of and different from Brahman or identical with it? In the former case the integrity of Advaita is disrupted as Brahman and māyā will be two separate and eternal principles. That will lead to dvaita or duality as a metaphysical ultimate. If māyā is one with Brahman, will it not damage the purity of Brahman, seeing that māyā is compacted of the qualities of

sattva, rajas and tamas? Will not the nirguṇa Brahman be contaminated by māyā?

Obviously, according to Advaita, māyā cannot have a co-evel status with Brahman; not can it be an independent reality like Brahman. Maya is the finitising principle of the Universe; it is that which makes the One unmanifested (avyakta) undifferentiated, formless and nameless qualitiless and actionless Brahman into the manifested (vyakta) variously differentiated universe of diverse forms and names, exhibiting qualities and engaged in action. The electric current that is carried through the wires is current, pure and simple. It does not function as such. It is nirguṇa and niṣkriya in a manner of speaking. But when mediated by appropriate mechanism, the current exhibits itself in various forms of activity as light, power, heat etc. Māyā therefore makes the pāramārthika or transcendental Reality which is one without a second into the empirical universe of multiple forms and patterns.

How exactly does this take place is a question that we who are the victims of māyā cannot answer. Māyā is a principle which operates in the process of finitisation and ceases to function as such for the jñāni who has shed his consciousness

of finitude and is absorbed in and by the Infinite. As Power-principle, māyā is spoken of Śakti which is triguṇātmika and gets personified as a Deity or a Devatā. From another point of view, māyā is inseparable from Brahman, being indistinguishable from it like fire and its heat. Even as heat resides in fire as its inseparable constituent, yet not different or apart from it, māyā is a non-different constituent of Brahman revealed in the finitising process responsible for the appearance of the pāramārthic One into the vyāvahāric Many. Exactly how this takes place, we at the finitised end cannot saya. It is a mystery; hence the name māyā.

VI. SARGUṆA BRAHMAN

From Principle to Person

Nirguṇa Brahman is the metaphysical principle of the universe. It has no form, no parts; it does not act; but it is the ultimate Substance of the universe shorn of all kinds of distinctions. As has been stated earlier, it cannot be conceived of by the intellect functioning in the duality of subject and object, and so it cannot be described either. It can only be realised as a Truth, as an ultimate Fact, as a Reality that underlies, that permeates, and also transcends the phenomenal world and the individual self. By itself, i.e. without the activating catalyst of māyā, the Nirguṇa Brahman cannot make the transition into the manifold of the universe extended in name and form. There can be no passage from absolute Being to contingent Becoming.

When nirguṇa Brahman is associated with the guṇa ridden māyā, it is spoken of as *saguṇa*. It is conceived of as having a form, a name, of having qualities and of acting in relation to the world. Then what is an abstract *Principle* in the nirguṇa aspect, becomes a concrete *Person* in the saguṇa aspect. What is qualitiless is spoken of as endowed

with qualities like Goodness, Grace, Beauty etc. What is nameless is given a number of names as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Rāma, Kriṣna, Devi, etc. What is actionless is thought of as doing the actions of creation, sustenance and dissolution.

Nirguṇa Brahman is not for the man bound by ajñāna. It is only for him who is bold and fearless, prepared to renounce all duality. It is he who has come out of the darkness of ajñāna into the light of jñāna that can realise it. It becomes a felt experience for him transcending all phenomenal categories. 'The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman and he attains the Highest (*Brahmavidāpnoti param*). In the Brahmānubhava state relating to nirguṇa Brahman there is no duality with a distinction of experiencer and what is experienced. It is only experience as such, plenary experience without anything outside.

The Religious Predicament

The saguṇa Brahman is connected with the predicament of Religion involving the duality of deity and devotee and is sustained by it. In the goal of religious endeavour which is mystic experience in which the devotee is merged or lost in the deity, we have again the annulment of duality. Even then there is only union, not unity, *sāyujya*,

not *ekatva*. But till that goal is reached, the saguṇa Brahman called God or Īśvara is the Highest Reality to the man of religion and is absolute for him. God is as real and supreme to the devotee or the *upās'aka* as the nirguṇa Brahman is to the Brahmajñānai. Those who cannot climb to the abstract heights of contemplation and realisation of the nirguṇa Brahman are worshippers of the saguṇa Brahman.

Thus, according to Advaita, there are two orders of Brahman, the nirguṇa and the saguṇa. The former is spoken of as *para* or higher *Brahman* and the latter as *apara* or lower Brahman. It would appear that except in the case of gifted persons, the path to the realisation of the nirguṇa Brahman is through the saguṇa Brahman. On the ultimate view that the means to liberation is finally by jñāna born of instruction (*upadeśa*) Īśvara or the saguṇa Brahman is the Highest Preceptor of the Supreme Truth in which He initiates the aspirant who has earned His grace by unwavering devotion to Him. Moreover, this devotion trains the mind to detach itself from the enticements of the world, frees it of its entanglements and habituates it to unfaltering concentration so necessary for Brahman-realisation. It is

wrong to say that God has an inferior place in Advaita. It was pointed out earlier that the world is very real in the vyāvahārika state, that to the man bound by the upādhi of ajñāna, it is not an illusion by any means, but is endowed with a substantiality without which experience will not be possible. But the plurality-consciousness associated with the phenomenal world disappears at the level of Brahmajñāna. Even so, God is a fact of reality in the vyāvahārika stage; but in the pāramārthika stage, the question of the reality of God does not arise. The Supreme Reality divested of qualities etc., is Brahman; the same invested with them is Īśvara.

It has been said that even if there is no God, man would create Him for himself. Religion is the laboratory of the Spirit where the finite gets infinitised. In the sphere of religion man chastens himself by morality, orients himself body, mind and soul to the Divine calling out to It in petition and prayer to lift him from the slough of despond to the ethereal realms of his natural freedom. Religion is the vehicle of the transformation of the man as he *appears*, bound by his limitations, into the pure spirit that he *is* shorn of his material shackles. It is characterised by the submission of

the finite that is man to the Infinite that is God and is processed by surrender expressed in the words 'Thy will be done'. God is conceived of as an Almighty Person, the Ruler or niyantā, the Protector, the rakṣaka; and the devotee enters into diverse relations with Him determined by the mnanner in which he conceives Him, as father, son, mother, friend, guardian, lover, beloved, etc. An emotional bond connects the devotee and the Deity and the whole situation partakes essentially of a human nexus. All this is framed in the alphabet of human relationships in the sphere of the vyāvahāric world. But they cannot be spelt out in those terms in the ultimate stage of the nirguṇa Brahman where one transcends every distinction and limitation and where the language of the vyāvahāric world is stilled in silence. Hence the advaitic truth about saguṇa Brahman having reference to the vyāvahāric reality and being inapplicable in the pāramārthika realm.

But, as pointed out earlier, *inapplicability* in the pāramārthika stage does not mean *invalidity* in the vyāvahārika. The vyāvahārika must provide at once the lever and the fulcrum to raise the finite into the Infinite. For most mortals saguṇa upāsana is the means to the realisation of the nir-

guṇa Brahman. Sri Appayya Dīkṣitā declared *īs'varanugrāhadeva pumsām advaita vāsanā* ; it is only by the grace of God that man will be drawn to Advaita. A significant sloka in the Gītā says,

bhaktyā māmabhijānati yavan yascāsmi tattavatah, tatomām tattvato jñātvā viśate tadanantaram. The Lord said: It is only by bhakti that one can know My real nature, *who* I am empirically, and *what* I am really. Expounding this, His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, the Śankāracārya of Kānci said :

"It will do if one thinks of God at first as described in our classics as having a particular form and colour, clad in a particular way, as having four hands and wielding the conch, the discus and the mace. If one habituates oneself to go the temple to see the God there and to think of Him this way, then true devotion will gradually develop. When this true devotion dawns, the knowledge will arise that God is not in the temple only, that he is immanent in all things. Then the devotee understands the true nature of God, what and who He is (yāvān yascāsmi tattvatah).

'If one starts with meditation on God in particularised forms, eventually, by that very

devotion, one can understand His universal infinitude. When this truth is known (*tato mām tattvato jñātvā*), the Real that is infinite, that is formless and nameless is realised. That Infinite that has no eyes or ears or legs can see without eyes, hear without ears, and be everywhere without legs.....Before one can meditate on the unlimited, one must begin with the limited. If devotion begins with this meditation on the limited, it will lead naturally to the knowledge of the unlimited. Then the devotee is no longer different from the Deity. He is one with God. *vis'ate tadanantaram.* The knower of Brahman *ipso facto* becomes (i.e. is) Brahman. Starting with devotion to God limited by name and form if one later realises the unlimited nature of God, the limited will be transcended. Yet, to realise the unlimited, one must start with devotion to the limited.

'Upon the realisation of the true nature of God through bhakti, one ceases to be separate from Him. *vis'ate tadanantaram.* That very moment one becomes that God. The bhakta turned jñāni merges in the waters of Infinite like a block of ice in water. The distinction of limited ice and unlimited water vanishes.'

Worship of the saguṇa, the ultimate for the māyā ridden.

This extract from Śri Śankarācārya of Kānci brings out two truths. The quotation from the *Gītā* emphasises that worship of saguṇa Brahman is not by any means to be considered inferior. It is an essential concomittant of *nirguṇa upās'anā*. Worship of *saguṇa* Brahman is the *ultimate* for the māyā-bound jīva with which nothing can be contrasted at the stage; for there is none in his consciousness to contrast it with. In other words, the saguṇa Brahman is real and final in the vyāvahārika level, as real as the nirguṇa Brahman is in the pārāmarthika level. That is why that an unparalleled Advaitin that Sri Sankara is breaks forth into devotional lyrics of ecstatic content in praise of the several aspects of the saguṇa Brahman in the course of his vyāvahāric pilgrimages to the holy shrines of India.

Another point to be borne in mind in this connection relates to the seeming polytheism of our religion. We seem to worship a number of Gods, like Shiva, Viṣnu, Kāḷi, Durga, Skanda, Gaṇapati etc , and the charge is laid at us that we are polytheistic. The truth is, as every one who has a proper understanding of our religion knows, not

that we worship different gods, but the worship One God in different forms, calling Him by different names. This identity of Godhead behind multiplicity of forms stems from the Advaitic concept of diversity in saguṇa Brahman due to the difference in the guṇa-complex. That constitutes Its māyic constituent. When that constituent is transcended, the saguṇa form along with the rituals of worship falls away leaving behind the lone unitary (and so universal) nirguṇa Brahman. Thus *saguṇopas'ana* fulfils itself in *nirguṇa anubhava* and, as all fulfilment is by negation, the saguṇa-consciousness too is annulled in the transcending. They are at best merely identifying marks. So, too creation and its complements, preservation and destruction are not the essence of Brahman, they are but forms of the saguṇa Brahman's empirical qualities.

Saguṇa Brahman as Creator

To the question How does God create ? What is the material that he employs and what are His instruments ?, Advaita Vedanta's answer is the doctrine of *abhinnanimittopādāna*, i. e. the non-different instrumental and material cause. In making a pot, the potter is the efficient cause and the stick (daṇda) is his instrumental cause. These

are the nimitta kāraṇas of the pot. The clay is the material cause (upādānakāraṇa). Since God is the All, and since there is nothing apart from Him, according to Advaita Vedānta, He is both the nimittakāraṇa and upādāna kāraṇa of the world. So understood, it is possible to combine the transcendence and the immanence views about God.

Creation etc. tatastha lakṣanas of Brahman

This will be the appropriate place to consider what is meant when it is said that God is the Creator of the world. Not only is He the Creator; He is also the Preserver and the Destroyer. Creation, Preservation and Destruction are activities of God who is the māyic edition of the Supreme Nirguṇa Brahman. By itself, as we saw, Brahman is actionless, niṣkriyam. So, these activities cannot pertain to It. But nirguṇa Brahman in the folds of māyā becomes saguṇa. Saguṇa means 'with guṇas or qualities' the generic qualities being sattva, rajas and tamas, the three being associated with dynamics of the creative, preservative and destructive processes. These qualities, however, do not constitute the essence of Brahman. They are not its *svarūpa-lakṣaṇas*; they merely form its identifying marks. They are called *tatasttha lakṣanas*. The former are inseparable from a thing like a man's skin; the

latter are separable like the hat or turban that he wears. These latter do not go into the essence of a thing.

Creation according to Advaita is not the production of something new. It is only what is ever existent appearing in a different form. In the transcendental state, it is all One only without a difference, without a second. In the empirical state the One is seen as many. What was undifferentiated now becomes differentiated; the *avyakta* becomes *vyakta*. Destruction is only the relapsing of the manifested back into the unmanifested state. Though it is spoken of as destruction, strictly it is *laya*. The pot was manifested in the antecedent clay; the clay became manifested as the subsequent pot; and the destroyed pot is clay once again relapsing into its anterior condition. Hence creation, preservation and destruction, *srsti*, *sthiti* and *laya* are not creations etc. anew, but the appearance and disappearance of something in a form different from its native original. Thus the creationist view in the vyāvahārika sense is not at variance with the vivarta vāda of Advaita. The Gita puts it thus:

avyaktādīnibhūtāni vyaktamadhyāni bhārata
avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra kāparidevanā.

The Purāṇic view of Brahma as the creator, of Viṣnu as the Preserver and of Śiva as the Destroyer are only personified expressions of this truth; for the three Divinities are not three separate from each other; but the same Divinity conceived of as three for purpose of understanding and of worship.

VII. INDIVIDUAL SELF OR THE JĪVĀTMAN

Every school of Vedānta distinguishes between the individual self or the jīvātman and the Supreme Self or the Paramātman. The nature of the jīvātman and its relation to the Paramātman are expounded differently in the different schools. According to Advaita, the jīvātman is essentially non-different from the Paramātman or Brahman This is spoken of *Jīva-Brahma abheda.*

Dehātma buddhi

Any individual whom we see is compacted of a soul referred to in Indian thought as the ātman, and a body. Ordinarily, a man identifies himself (i.e. his self) with his body. He confuses the one with the other, and the qualities of the one with the qualities of the other. This is spoken of as *dehātma buddhi.* To say: "I am a brahmaṇa or a kṣatriya", or "I am stout or lean", or "I am hale or sick" will be to attribute to the ātman designated by 'I' the qualities of caste, size and health which belong to the body. Similarly to entertain the idea that one will live for ever will be to attribute the quality of immortality of the ātman to the body. But this confusion between the body and the ātman and the attribution of the qualities

of the one to the other is a natural and ancient confusion common to all men.

The ātman is the innermost essence of a man back of the bodily sheaths known as the *annamaya*, *prānamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijñānamaya* and *ānanda-maya kos'as*, being respectively the material, the vital, the mental, the cognitive and the blissful sheaths. It is not to be identified with the sense organs, the organs of cognition namely the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin or with the organs of the action like speech hands, feet, the genitals and the anus, respectively known as the *jnānendriyas* and the *karmendriyās*. The ātman is not the breath of the individual or his mind or his intellect or his inner sense, his *prāṇa*, *manas*, *buddhi* and his *antahkaraṇa*. It has no size or sex or caste, or status. It neither acts nor enjoys. All these, size, sex etc. and action and enjoyment pertain only to the body and the manas. The ātman is is ever pure, untainted by any blemish. In fact, no quality can be attributed to it. It is mere Intelligence or *kevala cit*. It is the witness or *sākṣī* of the three states of *jāgrat*, *svapna* and *susupti*. It is that by which the eye sees, the ear hears, the mind thinks, the understanding and the ego function. Being incorporeal,

it is not to be identified with anything physical. It remains by itself in its lone luminous character of intelligence.

Upādhis

This ātman understood as pure intelligence or *kevala cit* is the same in all individuals or jīvas. The difference between one jīva and another is only in respect of the body and the bodily features encasing the ātman, in which the ātman indwells. The ātman by its nature is unlimited, (vibhu) but it appears as if limited within the confines of the body. These physical limitations are known as *upādhis* constricted into which the unlimited ātman is identified with those limitations. In fact, it is not the actual limitation by the upādhis so much as the wrong view of the ātman as thus limited. It is the ajñāna of the individual that is responsible for the seeming individuation of the ātman within the upādhis, and that leads to the impression of distinction of one person from another. In metaphysical fact, no person is different from any other *in his character as the atman.* The differences pertain to the upādhis or limiting adjuncts encasing the ātman.

The case is similar to differences of electric bulbs of different watts. The electric current flow-

ing into the bulbs is the same. It is of the same voltage. But the luminosity of the current is varied due to the upādhis of the several bulbs, their internal media and these are responsible for differences in illuminating effect. So too is the ātman identical in all persons; but they appear different and are spoken of as being different due to differences in the constricting upādhis.

If one is asked: When did this constriction of the unlimited ātman into the limitations of the upādhis begin, no answer can be given. Being the result of *ajñāna* which is responsible for the confusion between the ātman and the body, it is as old as ajñāna. Being ourselves subject to ajñāna, we cannot say when it began or how it occurred. It is *a fact* of empirical life, *loka vyāvahāra*, natural to it and conditioned by it. The purpose of Vedānta is to help one to get over this confusion, to understand the true nature of the ātman and realise it in one's experience even more vividly than one experiences the objects of the physical world.

Advaita does not stop with this. It goes a step further. Not only should one realise the ātman as different and apart from its bodily upādhis; one should also realise that the individuated ātman in each jīva is the same as the

Supreme Ātman or Paramātman or Brahman. There are various ways in which electricity is generated; by hydraulic and by thermal processes, to take but two examples. And, there are any number of hydro-electric and thermal stations all over the world. The voltage in the various generating stations may differ; but *as electricity* they are all the same. It is electricity as such, be it in the lightning, or in the laboratory cells, in the thermal or hydro-electric stations, that is variously manifested through those media. All of them are spoken of as electricity.

Even so, according to Advaita Vedānta, the individualised ātman in the several jīvas is of the same essence as the Supreme Ātman or Brahman. Both are of the nature of *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*. The jīvātman is only an abridged edition, as it were, of the Paramātman. Both are of the nature of pure Intelligence which makes all cognition through the physical senses possible. This is expressed in the dictum *prajñānam brahma*.

Theories of Jīvatma : 1 Avacchedavāda

A number of similies are given to explain that the jīvātman is only an abridgement of the Supreme Brahman. Each one of them is known as a theory respecting the nature of the jīvātman. The first is

based on the example of space or ākāśa in a pot in relation to the expansive space or ākāśa outside it. The first is called *ghatākāśa* and the second *mahākāśa*. In fact, there is no difference between the akāśa in the pot and the ākāśa outside it. Originally, it was all mahākāśa. When a potter made a pot, in the recess of the pot too is an ākāśa. The expanse of space is limited within its walls by the pot and when the mouth of the pot is closed by a lid, even then there is space in the empty pot walled off from the outside space by the limiting sides of the pot. That makes the space inside the empty pot get the name of ghatākāśa. It is the same space outside as is inside the pot. As space, they are not different.

When the pot is broken and its walls fall asunder, i.e. when the limiting adjuncts are removed, there is no more ghatākāśa. What was previously referred to as the ghatākāśa *ipso facto* becomes mahākāśa indistinguishable from it. This is known as the Limitation View of the jīva or the *avacchedavāda*. The body and its adjuncts, namely the *indriyas*, *prāṇa*, *manas*, *buddhi* and the *antahkaraṇa*, all limit the expansive infinite ātman into their moulds and make it appear as broken up into distinct entities like the many ghatākāśas in the

different *ghatas*. When one gets rid of the upādhi-consciousness, one realises one's non-difference from the Supreme shorn of these upādhis. The ghatākāśa is walled off by the pot from the mahākāśa outside it. When the conception of the separating wall goes, there is no inside or outside; what remains is only the mahākāśa.

2. Prātibimba vāda

The second example is of an original and its reflection in a reflecting medium like a mirror or in clear water. The reflection is non-different from the original and appears as such due to the medium. When the medium is removed, the reflection vanishes and the original alone remains. The truth is the original; the reflection is only its appearance. The haziness of the reflection or agitation or movement in it is due to the dullness of the mirror or to the movement in the water which are the upādhis. This is known as the *bimbapratibimba vāda*, or the theory of the Original and its Reflection. Brahman is the *bimba* reflected in the *upādhis* of the body and this gives rise to the *jīva* which is its reflection in the upādhis. This example also shows how the one identical Brahman appears as many jivas even as the same sun reflected in many vessels of water appears as many suns and as the

same man reflected in many mirrors appears as many men.

3. Ābhāsavāda

The third example is of the way in which a crystal appears when associated with a red flower. The red flower makes the crystal which is colourless appear as red by reason of its proximity to it. Really the crystal has no colour; the red flower is the upādhi which makes it appear red. Brahman is the crystal, the red flower is the upādhi which effects a change in the appearance of Brahman as Jīva. This is known as *ābhāsavāda*. When the reflection is considered vyāvahārika, it is pratibimba vāda; when it is considered as prātibhāsika it is ābhāsavāda.

The important point in all these examples is the fact of non-difference between the *ghatākas'a* and the *mahākās'a*, between the reflection and the original, and the seeming red of the crystal and its native colourlessness. Even so, the jīvātman is non-different from the Paramātman. It is the Paramātman whole and entire, not at all distinct from It and not merely a part of It. This is conveyed by dictum *ayamātmā brahma*. This ātman (referring to the jīvātman) is really the Paramātman (that is, Brahman).

Tattvamasi

It is the same truth that it is conveyed in the great declaration "*That Thou Art*" (*Tattvam asi*) 'That' or *tat* refers to the Paramātman or Īśvara; 'thou', *tvam* to the jīvātman and 'art', *asi* points to the essential non-difference *abheda* between the two. Īśvara by nature is infinite, omnipotent, all-pervading, all knowing, of superlative intelligence. He is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. The jīvātman by his limitations is finite, apparently confined to a limited place and time; it exists here and now not everywhere and at all times. Its powers of comprehension and action are limited. The one being infinite intelligence is all-knowing, *sarvajña*; the other being of delimited intelligence knows only in parts; it is *kincijña*. So, the question may be asked how can Īśvara and the jīvātman of such contradictory natures be said to be non-different from each other? How can identity be established between them? It has been even contended that not only will the statement of such an identity be a travesty of truth, but also the height of impertinence. How can man say 'I am God'? It may be asked: "How can there be identity between the firefly and the sun, between the servant and the master, between a well and the ocean, between

the speck of dust and a mighty mountain, the *paramāṇu* and *mahameru*?"

The concept of lakṣaṇas

When Advaita Vedānta speaks of identity between the two things constituting each of these pairs, when it says that the jīvātman is identical with the Paramātman, it is not literal identity, but identity in essence. There are two senses in which words are to be understood; the one refers to *literal* meaning, and the other to signified meaning. The one is called *vācyārtthah*: the other is called *lakṣyārtthah*. There are cases when the literal meaning or vācyārtthah will make no sense. Then what may be called the indicative or lakṣyārtthah will have to be taken. For example, when it is said of a man 'he is a lion', it is not meant that he is a carnivorous wild animal, the king of beasts (which is the literal import; vācyārtthah), but that he is brave as a lion (which is the signified import; lakṣyārttha). This is called the theory of lakṣanas (or indicative meanings) in Advaita. Lakṣaṇas are said to be of three kinds:

1. *jahallakṣaṇā*,
2. *ajahallaksaṇa*, and
3. *jahadajahallakṣaṇa* or *bhāgalakṣaṇa*.

In the first kind, the literal meaning makes way for the indicative meaning. When it is said: There is a hamlet on the Ganga, it is not to be understood that the hamlet stands on the *waters* of the Ganga. The statement indicates that there is a house on the *banks* of the Ganga. "Post this letter in the Mount Road" should not be taken to men "post this actually on the road called the Mount Road." It means "Post it in the Post Office situated on the side of the Mount Road." In these statements the reference to the waters of the Ganga or the road itself is ignored. It is the bank of the river or the building on the side of the road that is to be understood. The *whole* of the literal meaning or *vācyārthah* is discarded and the indicative meaning or *lakṣyārtha* is taken into account instead. This is called *jahallakṣaṇa*. (*Jahāti* means 'discards').

In the case of *jahallakṣana*, the literal meaning or the *vācyārtha* is entirely given up and the indicative meaning or the *lakṣyārtha* is adopted In *ajahallakṣaṇā*, however, the statement is to be understood without giving up the literal meaning. When a man says 'yoke the white to the carriage', what he means is 'yoke the white horse to the carriage.' The literal meaning of the word 'white'

applies also to the animal in which that colour inheres. Hence the literal meaning or *vācyārtha* is not sacrificed in the understanding of the statement. It is retained, not discarded.

The third is *jahadajahallakṣanā* or *bhāgalakāṣnā*. In interpreting a statement on this basis, one aspect of it is given up and another is retained. Suppose a young man of the name of Rāmakriṣṇa known to always appear with an unshaven face and a bushy beard acts the part of a heroine in a play. When the 'heroine' appears on the stage, one in the audience looks at 'her' and then exclaims to his neighbour 'Oh, this is our Rāmakriṣna!' What has he done? He identifies the 'heroine' who appears with a soft comely countenance, who is wearing feminine dress and jewellery with his friend whom he knows as with a bushy beard and dressed in male attire. The beard and the male dress were not essential parts of the individual nor are the soft face and the female dress. So, for the understanding of the individual, these, namely the beard and the male attire, and the soft face and female attire are adventitious and may be left out of account. They may be discarded. They will form elements of jahallakṣaṇā. But the individual as such remains the same and the man

says: *This person* who appears as heroine on the stage is *that person* who is our friend Rāmakriṣna. The common individuality of the two persons is retained and constitutes the ajahallakṣaṇā. Thus one part of the two appearances, the unshaven face and the male attire on the one hand, and the smooth cheeks and chin and female attire on the other are given up and another part, namely the common individuality in the two cases is retained. Hence this method of interpretation is called *bhāgalakṣaṇā* (*bhāga* means a 'part').

The great Declaration: "That thou art" (*Tattvamasi*) is to be understood on the basis of this jahadajahallakṣaṇā or bhāgalakṣaṇā. 'That' or *tat* refers to the Infinite Intelligence or Brahman who, qualified by guṇas, is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe etc. 'Thou' or *tvam* refers to the intelligence finitised by the upādhis and known as jīva of limited powers of understanding and action. On the principle of jahadajahallakṣaṇā interpretation, the guṇa or upādhi elements in the two cases are discarded and what remains is the intelligence or cit pure and simple. That leads to the meaning: *That* Intelligence which is Brahman denoted by 'That' or 'tat' is *this* intelligence or jīva denoted by 'Thou' or 'tvam'.

The word *asi* or 'art' points to the identity between the two intelligences shorn of the guṇas or upādhis which limit them.

The idea is that in his essence, which is really what matters in the last resort, the jīva is non-different from the Supreme Brahman. His physical elements starting from his sense-organs right upto his antahkaraṇa, not to speak of the external objects like wife, children, house, garden, bank account etc., which he wrongly identifies with himself in his ajñāna do not constitute his real nature. The reality about him which persists through all changes in these externals, which constitutes the core of his being, what is called his ātman is the cit in him. This cit is only the universal infinite cit now encased in a physical apparatus, and on account of that encasement, seeming to be different from it. The case is analogous to the ghatākāśa and the mahākāśa. The space inside the pot is really the expansive space of the universe. It appears different from the mahākāśa only by the fact of its being surrounded by the walls of the pot. But it is not different. In fact, it is mahākāśa itself encased in the pot, So too is each jīva the infinite intelligence encased in a physical frame. When a man de-identifies

himself i.e., thinks of his self apart from the physical containments, he remains as the cit which, in its nature, is non-different from the infinite cit or Brahman.

The Mahāvākya *Tattvamasi* has a twofold significance. In the first place, it points to the non-difference between the jīva and Brahman, *Jīvo-brahmaivanāparah* : The jīva is Brahman only and not different from it. In the second, it implies that essentially there is no difference between one jīva and another jīva. It is the same electricity that glows in all electric bulbs. The intensity of the glow may differ in several physical bodies making them appear as different jīvas. Thus it is not only *jīva-brahma abheda*, but also *jīva-jīva abheda* that is the central doctrine of Advaita Vedānta. If every jīva is Brahman, then every jīva is also every seemingly *other* jīva.

VIII. LIBERATION

The threefold truth of Advaita Vedānta is conveyed in a half-verse which says: *Brahmasatyam, jaganmithyā, jivobrahmaiva nāparah.* "Brahman is the final truth, the world is not-real, and the jīva is Brahman only, not different from it." This truth has not merely to be understood, but it has also to be realised in the experience of every person. Swami Vivekānanda said that Vedānta is the science of realisation. He reminded us that we are children of immortality (*amrtasya putrāh*) that, in reality, we are immortal, but have got into the meshes of the mortal through delusion.

The basic fact of life is entanglement in the world of material objects, in the diverse relations with other persons, in the constricting forces of love and hate, avarice and anger, joy and sorrow—all comprehensively called *samsāra*. This involvement in samśāra expresses itself in a plurality-consciousness based upon imagined differences, and in the performance of actions which perpetuate this sense of plurality. All this militates against the perception of the underlying unity and creates an impression that the differences are final and

permanent. So long as an individual lives in this condition, he is said to be in the bonds of samśāra. He is said to a *baddha*, one who is bound. This bondage is the cause of suffering and sorrow. The performance of actions which have a carry-over value leads to a succession of births in which the consequences of these actions take effect. This leads to a recurring cycle of births and deaths called *samsāra cakra* in which the person is caught up to his undoing.

An intelligent man must strive to liberate himself from this recurring circle of a succession of births and deaths. His object must be to go through the present life in such a manner that he will not be born again when his present life is over, that the death that will come to him at the end of the present life will be the last and so, he will not die again. In other words, he must pass from death to deathlessness, from mortality to immortality, from *mrtyu* to *amṛtam*. This passage from death to deathlessness is the process of liberation from the shackles of samśāra. It is called *mukti* or mokṣa, i.e., release or liberation.

This mokṣa leading to *amṛtatva* or immortality is the birthright of every man. It is also the duty which a man owes to himself. As Śri Śankara

observed in the opening verses of his *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, he is a fool who would waste the opportunity of this life having been born a man which has accrued to him as a result of merit acquired in countless lives in the past. If he does not strive now for his liberation, he is an *ātmahā*, one who commits 'suicide of the soul'. Hence every one must desire to be liberated. He must be a *mumukṣu*, one who longs for mokṣa. But to fructify, this longing needs a number of antecedent conditions to be fulfilled before it can serve as a dynamic impulsion setting one on the road to mukti.

These antecedent conditions are discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent, detachment from the enjoyments of this world now and of other worlds hereafter, and a series of disciplines which will keep one's mind steady and concentrated on the goal of liberation. These are known as *nityānitya-vastuviveka*, *ihamutraphalaboga*, *virāga*, and *samadamādi sādana sampat*. After one has been chastened by the proper cultivation of these virtues, then, and then alone will his desire for liberation or *mumukṣutva* find a congenial soil to grow into mukti. These together go by the name of the four-fold qualifications for every aspi-

rant to liberation. They are called *sādana catuṣtaya.*

The first, the discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal has reference to understanding that the ātman which is cit is eternal, that it is the true, the indestructible and the actionless, and that the world or prapañca is different from it, that as the object of sense-perception, the world is liable to destruction, hence non-eternal. This understanding is primary as it is the basis of the other three sādhanas.

Vairāgya, the second sādhana follows from a revulsion from all sensuous enjoyment of the things of the world extending from the body here to celestial regions yonder, because the joy that these things can give is neither pure (i.e. unmixed with pain), nor everlasting. This *nivrtti*, withdrawal of the mind from sense-pleasures is pre-condition of *pravrtti* or directing it to the quest of the ātman.

The third is really a group of mental disciplines known as *sama, dama, uparati, titīkṣā, sraddhā* and *samādāna. Sama* is the withdrawal of the mind from sense-objects overcoming the residury tendencies of the mind-object contact. *Dama* is withdrawal of the senses from those objects. *Uparati* is the restraint of the external

organs from all actions calculated to give sense-pleasures. *Titīkṣa* is a sense of endurance of the dualities of heat and cold, hunger and thirst. *Śraddhā* is faith in scripture and in the instruction of a guru. *Samādāna* is one pointed direction of the mind on the goal of ātmajñāna.

A person who has perfected in these sādhanas is qualified to strive for liberation, to be a mumukṣu. He then goes to a competent teacher who is himself a Brahmajñāni and begs to be instructed in the knowledge of Brahman in order to 'cross the ocean of samsāra and reach the other shore from which there is no return.' Since Brahman is not an object of sense-perception, one cannot get pratyakṣa knowledge of it. Being supersensuous, it can be known only by declaration of śāstra. The guru instructs the pupil in the texts speaking about Brahman and gives him the *upades'a* which will help him to divest himself of dehātmabuddhi and intimates to him the identity of his ātman with the Supreme Brahman by the māhāvākya *tattvamasi*. This is what may be called non-perceptual or *parokṣa* knowledge arising from the study of scripture. The pupil listens to this with reverential devotion, meditates on it and ultimately realises the truth of the instruction in

his own experience of its import. Then as a result of that experience, he is able to say 'I am Brahmam', *ahambrahmāsmi*. When he comes to that stage, when that Supreme Brahman is 'seen' in his own inner experience, that is the stage of *aparokṣa anubhava* or intuitive experience. For one who has attained this anubhava, the knots of the heart are cut asunder, all doubts vanish and all karmas are scotched in the fire of that experience leaving no residual tendency behind to sprout into another life. Such a person is said to be liberated. This is possible even in the present life as will be shown later and such a liberated person is called a *jīvanmukta*.

The foregoing are the personal mental and moral qualifications necessary for the acquisition of Brahmajñāna. The quest for Brahman has to be along a prescribed path. It must be understood that the ills of samsāra which afflict a man are due to his wrong identification of his self with things that are not, and cannot be his self. His ajñāna prevents him from separating his self from the non-self and he thinks that whatever happens to his non-self happens to his self. In the rope-snake delusion, it is the man's ajñāna of the true nature of the object that makes him see it as a snake and

get frightened. When by samyakjñāna, he discovers it is only a rope, his fright vanishes and he is relieved. Similar are our griefs and joys over things of the world. The ills of samśara are due to ajñāna which prevents the perception of the ātman and confounds it with things which are not the ātman. When the soul-sight of the ātman (i.e. *ātma sākṣātkāra* or *Brahmasakṣātkāra*) ensues upon samyakjñāna or higher wisdom, then with the vanishing of ajñāna, Brahman is realised, and that is liberation. Thus the final means to liberation or mokṣa is jñāna, which dispels the darkness of ajñāna. This is the fundamental position of Advaita Vedānta.

In order that one may attain this jñāna certain earlier stages should be gone through. The first is *karmānāuṣṭana* or the performing of actions prescribed in scripture and avoiding those prohibited by it. These must be done in a spirit of dedication without desire for their fruits. The discipline of karmānuṣṭāna purifies the body and the mind. *Cittasuddhi* is effected and such a person of pure mind become a devotee of God, who, pleased with his devotion, appears to him through a guru and instructs him in Brahmajñāna. Thus karma and bhakti are antecedent auxiliaries

to the method of attaining liberation. Bhakti too is an activity based on a devotional attitude to God. Karma implies a duality of deed and doer; bhakti subsists in the duality of Deity and devotee. The final state of liberation connotes the annulment of duality-consciousness of every kind and the experience of non-duality between the ātman and Brahman. So, these two, karma and bhakti cannot by themselves lead to mokṣa. They can only prepare the mind for jñāna which is the final means to mokṣa. Jñāna requires the grace of God in the form of the guru earned by devotion. Devotion itself, as a mental attitude, requires the soil of a mind purified by unattached karma in which alone it can grow.

Ultimately, liberation or mokṣa is the realisation of one's true nature as one really is. A distinction is made between *vastutantra* and *puruṣatantra*. Vastutantra pertains to the knowledge of a thing as it is, like knowing 'that is the moon; this is the sun: the rose is red' etc. There is nothing to *do* about it. Upon the disappearance of the ignorance of an object, knowledge of it dawns of its own accord. In puruṣatantra on the other hand, something is done by a man like producing an object, going to a place, modifying

something or removing a blemish and purifying something. In all these cases something is done by a man to something else. Hence it is called puruṣatantra.

Puruṣatantra means dependent upon the man who acts as he likes. *Vastutantra* means dependent on the object and independent of the puruṣa.

Liberation or mokṣa is not the result of karma which is puruṣatantra. It is the result of enlightenment which is vastutantra and which dawns on a person and he realises his true self as it is in its lone splendour, and he no more confuses it with what is not his self as he did before. The mahāvākya *tattvamasi* implies that each one of us is and has ever been Brahman. Only, due to our ajñāna we do not know it. When we realise that we have been all along and are Brahman even now, the ajñāna vanishes. So, the state of mokṣa does not fall under any of the categories of things done. That is, it is not *utpādyam*, *āpyam*, *vikāryam* or *saṃskāryam*. It is not *utpādyam*, what is to be produced. Mokṣa refers to what has no beginning. What is utpādyam, has a beginning. Here and now on the dawn of jñāna, a man realises his true self which has always been there and its non-difference from Brahman. It is not *prāpayam* or what is to be

attained. A state is now attained means it was not so before. But everyman is Brahman always; only he does not know it due to his ajñāna. Mokṣa is not the attainment of a new state or going to a new place. It is the realisation of what one always has been. Again, mokṣa is not *vikāryam*, a modification of an existing state. For what is subject to modification will decay and die, and mokṣa is ever-existing, unchanging and immortal. It is not *samskāryam*, what is purified. Purification implies either removal of an existing impurity or addition of fresh purity. Brahman is ever pure. There is no impurity in it to be removed. It is perfect purity and no fresh purity can be added to it. Hence, all these features of *puruṣatantra* which go with karma or action cannot apply to mokṣa which is realisation of one's nature as one really is i.e. *vastutantra*. *Vastutantra* is provided only by wisdom or jñāna which alone, therefore, is the true and final means to mokṣa.

To explain that mokṣa is only the realisation of an existing truth, three analogies are usually given. One is *vis'mrta kanṭabharaṇa*; the second is *vyādhavarmdhita rājakumāra* and the third refers to *dasamastvamasi*. A woman, forgetting that her necklace is round her neck goes about anxiously searching for it everywhere and querying everybody.

Another woman tells her: 'It is there round your neck'. "Then the first woman exclaims: 'Thank God! I have *got* my necklace *back*". In truth she never 'lost' it to get it back. She was oblivious of its existence round her neck. In her ajñāna she thought she had lost it. Her 'getting it now' is only getting the knowledge that it has been already and always round her neck. So too there is no 'attainment' of Brahman in mokṣa; it is only gotting the awareness that one is Brahman already and always.

The second analogy relates to a prince who was abandoned in a forest in his infancy, was picked up by a hunter and grew in his hut. As he grew up, he was thinking that he was only a hunter, till some years later, the ministers of his royal father discovered him in the hunter's home, identified him as their long lost prince and told him that all along he was prince of the land only and not a hunter as he wrongly thought he was. Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas going to Karna on the eve of the Mahābhārata war and telling him that he is not Rādheya but a Pāndava, her own son is a similar example.

The third analogy is of ten rustics who crossed a river in their travels and wished to make sure,

after reaching the other shore, that all the ten of them had safely crossed over. Each one of them counted the rest and found there were only nine. They began to wail that one of them had died while crossing the river. In came a stranger who asked them the cause of their wailing. They reported that they were ten before they crossed the river, but now they were only nine and so one of them had evidently died. The stranger made all of them stand in a row and counted them '1, 2, 3.....9' and pointing to the last man in the row, said 'thou art the tenth' (*dasamastvamasi*). At once the rustics jumped with joy that the tenth man had been restored to them.

In these analogies, the necklace was never lost, the prince did not become a hunter's son and the tenth man was not drowned. The necklace was always on the woman's neck; by her ajñāna she imagined she had lost it. When told by another, she regained, i.e., realised what has always been there. Due to his ajñāna of his real nature, the prince wrongly thought that he was the hunter's son. On being told by the ministers, he realised his nature as the prince that he had always been. The tenth man did not die; they all wrongly imagined in their ajñāna that they had lost the tenth man. When

told by the stranger, they realised that the tenth man was always with them.

Thus too mokṣa is the realisation of the ever-pure ever-existing ātman and its non-difference from Brahman arising out of proper instruction by a guru which is meditated upon and on the disappearance of the wrong notion of its true nature. Liberation is really being liberated from the darkness of a wrong idea ; it is synonymous with the disappearance of ajñāna and the dawn of true wisdom or samyakjñāna about one's ātman and its identity with Brahman.

The purpose of the study and the practice of Vedānta is the attainment of mokṣa from the sāmsāric cycle of recurrent births and deaths. Every one desires to be happy. No one desires pain and sorrow. The joys of this world are fouad to be fleeting. They are not unmixed with pain. Believing in the Vedas, if one performs yajñās to reach celestial abodes one can enjoy pleasures, not of this world. Yet such pleasures will last only so long as there is store of merit or *puṇya* by which one has secured them. On the exhaustion of this puṇya, one must be born as a mortal on earth subject to the succession of lives.

So, the aim of an intelligent man must be to attain a happiness which is not merely physical or even mental, which is everlasting aud which is unmixed with sorrow. Such happiness is called bliss or *ānanda*. It is super-excellent, trans-sensuous and *sui generis*. All the joys of the world are only pale and remote reflections of this ānanda, an infinitesimal fraction of it. This applies not only to earthly joys, but also to the joys of an Indra, the first and foremost of the celestials.

The purpose of Vedānta is thus to instruct in the way in which one can attain this ānanda and to put a stop to the recurrent cycle of birth and death. It is an answer to the ancient prayer. "Lead me from death to Immortality", *mṛtyor mā amṛtam gamaya*. Advaita Vedānta examies the root cause of birth and death. It is a cardinal doctrine of Hindu religion and philosophy – in fact of all India systems except that of the materialistic Cārvākas—that the present life is only one in the series of many lives that one has had in the past, and will be followed by many more in future if one does not endeavour to make this one's last. The birth or *janma* of any individual is to be traced to the residual karmas and their tendencies (*vāsanas*) which persisted in their operation at the end of the

last life or series of lives in the past. So long as there is unliquidated karma, by the law of spiritual causation, none can escape the involvement in a janma with its attendant pains and privations and also it pleasures and joys.

So, if there should not be a janma after the present one, (a) the seeds of accumulated karmas should be scotched and (b) the balance of karmas should not be added to. Karma or action is the result of desire born of a sense of incompleteness. Generally speaking desire or kāma for the ephemeral things of the world is due to ignorance of one's own native excellence and fullness, wrongly believing that one will be incomplete without them, and so desiring them, and confusion of one's self with the body and the things to which the body attaches itself. In Vedāntic language this is called adhyāsa.

Advaita Vedānta steps in at this point and seeks to rid a person of his adhyāsa. It tries to invest him with knowledge of his ultimate self as compacted of unalloyed eternal absolute bliss and shows him the way to live in the ecstatic experience of that bliss. When that condition is realised, the ills of the world and of the physical body cease to afflict a person. Our religion recommends that

karmas which are inescapable from the human predicament should be performed without attachment to their effects and in a spirit of dedicatiom to God. In the process, one is to detach oneself from the agency of those karmas. Realising one's true nature as the ātman which neither acts nor enjoys, which is ever unitary and universal, lacking nothing, one should go about with the feeling that the roots of action are in the physical part of oneself, the *prakṛti* and also that the fruits of action belong to God and that, as the ātman, one has no part or lot in it

This awareness can come only from jñāna about one's true nature and from divesting oneself from the wrong identification with the physical body and all that are associated with it. Upon the dawn of the jñāna, the sorrows of life lose their edge and in one's steadfast wisdom, as a *sthita-prajña*, one attains a mental equipoise neither elated by the joys of the world nor depressed by their opposites. Such a person attains an autonomy of the spirit, *swārājya* and goes about the concerns of the world like an automaton. The actions that he performs are not prompted by any selfish desire, but purely to keep himself alive, i.e., for his *deha-yātrā*, and so they do not bind him. The fire of

ātmajñāna burns all karmas to ashes and like fried seeds, they will not sprout any more. They will not bind him any longer leading to a further janma.

Thus, according to Advaita Vedānta, jñāna is the sole means to liberation from samsāra. Ritualistic karma leads to continuoue involvement in it and can give a person only inferior pleasure. Moreover, as shown earlier, karma can pertain only to what is not yet, but has to be effectuated. Mokṣa is an existing condition of every man. 'You are Brahman ; only due to your ajñāna you are not aware of it.' Śāstra declares it and the guru instructs it. Relying on śāstra and on the words of the guru, if a person meditates on this truth having previously divested himself of *dehātma buddhi*, he will eventually convert this declaration into a fact of his own experience. The transition will be effected from *tattvamasi*, (That thou art) to *ahambrahmāsmi* (I am Brahman), from upadeśa to anubhava. That is the meaning of the statement *brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*: the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. The knowledge that a person gets from books and from the teacher about his being Brahman is called *parokṣa jñāna*. It is not *pratyakṣa*, given by sense-perception. It

is a sort of hearsay. But it is accepted with understanding and faith. Then constant meditation on it leads to experiential realisation of this truth which is called *aparokṣajñāna* which is immediate and indubitable trans-sensuous feeling of being Brahman.

A word must be uttered about the statement '*brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*: The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. Firstly, this 'knowing' is the trans-intellectual. In the final stage it is more of the nature of an *illumination* than of mere *understanding* by the categories of reason. Secondly, 'becoming' Brahman does not imply a change of state or an attainment. The Sanskrit root *bhū* from which *bhavati* is derived means both 'being' and 'becoming'. It is 'being' that is to be understood by *bhavati*, not 'becoming'. It is *being now as ever before*, not becoming something new hereafter. It is only realisation, or remembering what one has been all along, but which one was not aware of due to ajñāna. It is worthwhile to recall here the analogies of the ornament round the neck and of 'thou art the tenth' etc. explained earlier.

Liberation according to Advaita Vedānta, therefore, is the realisation of what one is and has been always; not going to a new place elsewhere

or attainment of a new condition. It is brought about only by jñāna and not by karma. Not even by the combination of the two jñāna and karma, *jñānakarma samuccaya*. For, jñāna which relates to the existing nature of an object (*vastutantra*) and karma which refer to effectuation by a person (*puruṣatantra*) cannot be combined. A previously non-existent thing is produced by karma. And, what is produced is liable to destruction. Before the potter makes it by the professional skill of his action, the pot was not. After some time, short or long as it may be, the pot will not be. Brahmanhood of every jīva is an established ever-present eternal fact; it is not an act required to be performed. An act a is temporal event. We are here concerned with an eternal truth. The temporal cannot be the cause of the eternal. What is not an object of production cannot be produced (*nāstyakṛtah kṛtena*).

Necessary as devotion or bhakti is for spiritual progress, it is the penultimate means to liberation. If it is conceded that ātmajñāna or realisation of one's true nature is the sole means to it, then it will be seen that devotion with its predicament of duality between the devotee and the Deity cannot bring one out of the duality-consciousness which is tho opposite of advaitic experience. Moreover,

bhakti is directed to Īśvara or the saguṇa Brahman which is māyic expression of nirguṇa Brahman which alone is the truth in the last resort. But on this account bhakti is not to be despised. Conditioned as the aipirant is by māyā, subject to the limitations of experiential world, he has to earn the grace of God to obtain the enlightenment which will fructify in advaitic realisation [1] Karmānuṣṭana brings about *cittasuddhi*. A mind is so purified is qualified for devotion to God. The effect of this devotion is mental concentration or *ekāgratā* which is the essential condition for meditation on the mahavakya *tattvamasi*.[2] The fulfilment of this meditation is being Brahman.

Bhakti helps one to understand God as the Supreme Brahman as of manifold names and forms due to the upādhis which are necessary for the creation, the preservation and the dissolution of the world. The same bhakti provides illumination of the nature of this Brahman transcending the upādhis as the Absolute One, the Pure Intelligence, that is unborn, beyond Time and Space, and which is the All. This illumination is tattvajñāna respecting Brahman. One who has attained it is *Brahmavit* and *ipso facto*, he *is* Brahman.

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1. *Īśvarānugrahadeva pumsām advaita vāśanā.*
2. *Atha parabrahmātmanā sthīyatām.*

IX. JĪVANMUKTI AND KRAMA MUKTI

Advaita Vedānta speaks of two kinds of liberation, *jīvamukti* or liberation while now alive, and *krama mukti* or gradual liberation after a course of spiritual education in future births. All other schools of Vedānta affirm that mokṣa can be attained only *after* the end of the present life. That is known as *videhamukti* or *mukti* after separation of the soul from the present body. Advaita Vedānta, however, affirms the possibility of mukti even in this life. This is a necessary corollary of the Advaitic theory of liberation which is liberation from the sway of ajñāna and the attainment of ātmajñāna. The removal of ajñāna should occur during the life when one is subject to it. Ajñāna should be liquidated here and now when the light of jñāna is shed on it. It is in this life that one acquires jñāna. And, the moment that one becomes an ātmajñāni, he is immediately freed from the shackles of samsāra. A person who has attained liberation by such ātmajñāna is said to be liberated while yet alive. He is called a *jīvanmukta*. But if he dies immediateiy on the dawn of ātmajñāna, he is called *sadyomukta*.

A distinction must be made between *salvation* and *liberation*. Salvation is a theistic idea. It

relates to the saving the soul from damnation, to salvaging it from the slough of despond. It connotes the act of a Saviour and the intercession of a mediator between the sinner and the saviour. Salvation is wrought by human penitence on the one hand, and by divine grace on the other, and it can be brought about only after the present life is over. Liberation is a metaphysical idea. It is synonymous with freedom of the ajñāna-ridden individual from his ajñāna. This does not wait for a future life. It has to take place here and now, and it can do so.

Jīvanmukti is not a mere possibility. It is a fact. The spiritual history of mankind bears evidence of jīvanmuktas who have vouched for it in their own lives. The great Śaṅkara himself, to mention the greatest of them all in history, is an outstanding instance of a jīvanmukta. Both before his time and since, there have been many such who have realised their identity with Brahman and walked the earth as jīvanmuktas. The former group includes Śuka, Vāmadeva, Prahlāda and Janaka. Among the latter have been Sadāśiva Brahmendra, Śri Ramakriṣna, Swami Vivekānanda, Bhagavān Ramaṇa, Jagadguru Sri Candrsekhara Bhārati of Sringeri Pīṭa and, and happily

with us, Jagadguru Sri Candrasekharendra Śaraswatī of Kānci Kāmakoti Pīṭha.

It is wrong to argue that a mukta does not, and should not live after he has attained liberation. Mukti in the sense that Advaita Vedānta understands it is not mukti from life; it is mukti from death, from mortality. It is the attainment of immortality by the removal of ajñāna which is the cause of karma and the perpetuation of lives. Life in the present body, that is, the present *janma* is due to the operation of the *prārabdha* karmas. By the law of spiritual causation, every act will bear its fruit which must be enjoyed or suffered according as it is pleasant or painful. Ordinarily, there is no escape from its effects. Not all acts bear fruit in the same life in which they were performed. They take a shorter or longer time to fructify according to their nature. Some bear fruit in a future life necessitating another birth. The series of births will continue so long as there are unliquidated karmas.

These karmas are of three kinds. One of them relates to the future. They are the karmas which a person will do hereafter; for, so long as a man lives in a body he will continue to act and such actions will bear fruit later. They are called *āgāmi*

karmas; they are what will accrue hereafter. A person will be affected by them if he performs them with a sense of agency and a desire to enjoy their fruits, that is, so long as he has the sense of *kartṛtva* and *bhoktṛatva*. But an ātmajñāni who has divested himself of wrong identification with the body goes through these karmas with the awareness that their roots are to be traced to his physical part, his *prakṛti* and that their fruits belong to God. And so, he is not touched by these karmas. They will not bind him; they will have no carry-over value to another life.

There are karmas which a person has performed already, in the present life before the atiainment of ātmajñāna or in past lives. They are accumulated store of his karmas; they are called *sancitā karmas*. They have not yet borne fruit. They are the seeds which a person has sown in the present life or earlier and which wait to grow and fructify. Upon the dawn of ātmajñāna, these seeds are turned to ashes and so cannot bear fruit. They are simply negated. They become inoperative.

The case is different with that part of *sancita karma* which has begun to bear fruit. It is like an

arrow discharged from a bow. It cannot be called back. It will stop only after hitting its target. These karmas are called *prārabdha karmas*. The body and the duration of the present life have been determined by them and cannot be annulled even by *ātmajñāna*. The jñāni must live out the days in the present janma till the stock of the *prārabdha karma* is exhausted by experience of its effects. When this has been done, he takes leave of his body, which then falls away from him. He will not be born again after that. The jñāni who was jīvanmukta before he died is said to have attained *videhamukti* after his death. Mukti while still in the body before death continues in the state without body after death.

How does the jīvanmukta go through his life for the remainder of his days? He is a *brahmavit*; one who has experiential consciousness of Brahmanhood. He realises himself as pure Intelligence. He is not attracted to sense objects; no sin attaches to him. He is neither attracted nor repelled by anything. He is self-contained and self-satisfied. He enjoys a bliss that is not of this world. Even as a lad delights in his playthings unconcerned with his hunger or afflictions of

body so too does he delight in Brahman with no consciousness of 'I' or 'mine'. A serene stillness of mind, eating what is offered, drinking out of a tank or river, moving about autonomously like an automaton, sleeping without fear even in forests or burning grounds, being unconcerned about apparel wet or dry, or even with no covering round the body, with the bare ground as the couch and wandering in the royal roads of scriptural sayings—these are the ways in which the jīvanmukta sports in Brahman. He goes about in the expanse of supreme wisdom like an unsophisticated child, like one possessed or like a mad man. To some he appears as a fool; to others as a royal personage. Some call him mad; others are drawn to him by the lustre of his countenance. Sometimes he lies inert. Now he is honoured; or he is ridiculed. Or, he is ignored. Though in the body, he has no body consciousness. He is firmly established in his true self, and so pleasure and pain, good and evil do not affect him in the least. Joy and sorrow pertain to one who has attachments. But one who is detached from everything worldly, is untouched by good or evil.

Thus a jīvanmukta cares not for his body or its needs. He is not worried about its decay or

destruction. The space encased in a pot is unaffected by its walls, whether they are intact or broken. When the pot is broken, the space it contained becomes indistinguishable from the space outside. So too does a jīvanmukta's ātman become indistinguishable from Brahman in which it has ever been. Like milk mixing with milk and becoming one with it, oil with oil, water with water, so too does the ātmajñāni merge in Brahman and is one with It. When this happens, upon the fall of the body, the mukta never more gets into a body again. He does not return to an embodied state. He is not born again; he is immortal.

Of a truth, from an ultimate Advaitic point of view, there is no bondage of the ātman, and hence there is no meaning in speaking of its release. It is all an 'as if', a make-believe. Man has made himself believe that he is the body etc., and so is said to be bound by it. It is his ajñāna that makes him feel so. Really the ātman is unbound and free. Bondage and liberation are expressions of māyā; they do not pertain to the ātman which is ever unaffected by the upādhis even as the sun is unaffected by the cloud that hides it from view. By the same token, scripture, the guru, instruction by him are all features of *māyic-prapañca*. At best

they are all scaffoldings to ascend to the *brāhmī-sthiti* and to remain firmly established in it. They have no meaning ultimately. Even so, even saying 'I am Brahman' (*aham brahmāsmi*) does not pertain to this *brāhmīsthiti*. In that condition there is no awareness of *I* of which *am Brahman* can be affirmed. Upon the breaking of the pot, ghatākāśa does not say 'I am the mahākāsa'. It is mahākāśa before, and mahākāśa after the pot was broken. It is, as it were, speechless. *Brāhmīsthithi* is experience, transcendental, not of the worldly type; it does not permit of expression. It is *being*, not *speaking*. The Upaniṣadic teacher explained it by silence (*maunam vyākhyānam*).

The other kind of mukti is called *kramamukti* or the attainment of liberation by stages[1] The means for it is the meditation on the *praṇava mantra*. It is called *Omkāropāśana*. Only a person who has turned his mind inward withdrawing it from sense objects is qualified for it. A householder involved in secular affairs, like marriage, raising a progeny, acquiring wealth etc.

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1. The following description of the way of kramamukti is taken from the *Vicārasāgara* by Sadhu Niscaladās in Hindi translated into Sanskrit by Sri Vāsudeva Brahmendra Saraswatī Swāmigal.

cannot turn his mind inward with that absolute concentration which *Omkāropāsana* requires. This qualification is available only to a sanyāsī who is a *Paramahamśa*. This *Omkāradhyāna* on prescribed lines takes a person in his subtle body to *Brahmaloka*. There he attains mukti or freedom (*svātantrya*) not available to men, to pitṛs and devas. *Hiraṇyagarbha* is the lord of Brahmaloka. He is the controller of all subtle bodies. (*samasta sūkṣmabhimānī cetanah*) He is known as the *aparabrahma* or the kārya brahma. The world over which the kāryabrahma presides is called *Brahmaloka*. But if, on reaching to Brahmaloka, one meditates on the kārya Brahman, one becomes inclined to the enjoyments of that region, the mukti that one attains is known as *sāyujyamukti*, of union with *kāryabrahman*. Such a one acquires the eminence and the powers of *Hiranyagarbha*. These includes ability to accomplish whatever is intended, taking any body that is desired, and enjoyment of everything by a mere wish. He acquires all excellences except those pertaining to creation, preservation and destruction. In all other respects, such an upāśaka is like Hiraṇyagarbha. At the time of the periodic deluge (*pralayakāla*), when the Hiraṇyagarbha loka also

comes to an end, ātmajñāna springs in such a person by hearing etc., and he obtains videha-mokṣa.

The celestial path by which such an upāśaka is led after his death to Hiraṇyagarbhaloka is called *Uttarayaṇamārga* or *Devayānamārga* or *Arcirādimārga*. He is not born in the world after this ; and for him the cycle of samśāra has ceased to revolve.

It must be emphasised that either kind of mukti, jīvanmukti or kramamukti, requires a rigorous physical and mental discipline. Absolute faith in śāstra which alone can intimate *parokṣa* knowledge of Brahman is a fundamental requirement. This is because Brahman is beyond perception by the physical senses and cannot be grasped by dialectical reasoning which draws its data only from sense-perception. The second requirement is instruction by a guru who is himself a Brahmajñāni and who condescends to become extrovert to provide upadeśa to a competent pupil who has acquired the four-fold qualifications known as the *sādanacatuṣṭaya*. The pupil thus qualified is to approach the guru with due humility and with deep devotion to him, ask to be instructed in

Brahmavidyā, receive the instruction administered with the guru's grace, meditate on it, understand if possible in this life itself its meaning and realise its substance in himself or by the process of Omkāropāśana after this life in the Hiraṇya-garbhaloka.

X. THE GOAL AND THE WAY

Advaita Vedānta is not merely a philosophy only to be understood; it is a religion to be practised with a goal to reach, namely the realisation of one's non-difference from the Supreme Reality. It is not just an intellectual exercise; it is spiritual endeavour. The adhikāri (the person qualified for it) is the *tīvra mumukṣu*, he who has an earnest and consuming desire for liberation from samsāra.

It is cardinal to the Hindu view to look upon life in the world as a bondage. It is called samsāra-bandha. This may appear to be a pessimistic view to take But let us reflect. It behovs every one of us to ask ourselves the questions: Whence am I? What am I? and Whither do I go? Each one of us is in essence an immortal soul encased in a physical body and conditioned by nescience. None can say when and how this encasement happened. Jīvātma which refers to this encasement is beginningless; it is anādi. It is a fact to be reckoned with without trying to find its origin; for that will be profitless. But having got so encased, we have identified ourselves with the encasing material to the extent of believing that

we are none other than that material. This, as was pointed out earlier, is called dehātmabuddhi, the belief that the body itself is the ātman. This wrong identification of the ātman with the body makes a man feel that he is happy or otherwise when anything pleasant or its opposite happens to the body so long as he is alive. But, strangely enough, these bodily and mental joys (mind also being included under the bodily aspect of a man, are not the best or the purest that one can have. Wordly joys are temporary and often mixed with pain alike when they are striven after and when they are lost. True happiness must be everlasting and unmixed with pain. This can never be secured so long as the soul (ātman) tenants a body subject to body-consciousness. In essence the ātman is of the nature of unalloyed undecaying bliss. So it is the realisation of the ātman, *ātmasakṣātkāra* that can dower a man with true and pure bliss. Though it is *anādi* (beginningless), jivatva is not *ananta* (endless). It can be put an end to. This will happen when a man divests himself of body-consciousness and dwells in the bliss of atman-consciousness.

It is to attain this that every man must strive. But being involved in life's activities by reason of

birth with a body is an impediment to this realisation. The course of life (janma) is beset with so many cares and anxieties. Hope deferred, aspirations denied, efforts foiled, best intentions misunderstood, recognition of the undeserving and desert ignored are boulders on the road of life hindering its easy passage and making the heart sick. To say with the poet, 'life is real, life is earnest' is all right taking a short term view of life; yet 'the paths of glory lead but to the grave'; and, in the ultimate analysis, when one stands at death's door and calculates the credit and debit, one will come to the conclusion that the thorns of life far exceed its petals. The seeming pleasures that one has enjoyed will then appear vapid and vacuous and one will then be forced to exclaim with Jesus about its not availing to gain the whole world at the expense of the soul. Not a few of us would bewail that we had not served our God with even a fraction of the zeal with which we served our earthly masters.

That is why invariably all the prophets, saints and seers of the world, of all times and all lands, have laid emphasis on renunciation of the world, of everything worldly as the prime condition of spiritual achievement. The supreme objective of

man is not to enjoy the things of the flesh, the pleasures which our senses bring us by their contact with material objects. If attachments are discarded, said Nammālwār, the Tamil saint, salvation is at hand. (*patradu atrel utradu vīdu*).

The only way to get rid of attachments is to attach oneself to That which has no attachments. That is what Tiruvalluvar taught: (*patratrān patrinaippatruha patru vīdarku*). Attach thyself to Him who has no attachments to get rid of all earthly attachments. Then one enjoys a felicity which is not of this world, nor even of the celestial regions, but one which passeth understanding and expression. An abiding peace begets a transport that does not stale and which does not die.

It may be argued that such a way of looking at a life is to adopt an individualistic and selfish attitude without any concern for the welfare and happiness of others. Let it be conceded that so long as man lives in the body and for it, as a member of society, it is his obligation as it is his privilege to bring about and promote the well-being of his fellowmen. This has been laid down in the āśramic division of Hindu life by laying this duty on the grahastha who is the linchpin of society, his being the *sarvopakārakṣamam āśramam* as Kāli-

dāsa would put it. The householder-āśrama (gārhasthya) is only a *stage* on the pilgrimage of life. It has not been prescribed as the *goal* of life. The opportunities of that station have a two fold reference, one to support one's fellowmen who need that support, and secondly, by the dhārmic governance of the pursuits of artha and kāma which are the objectives of gārhasthya, to prepare the mind for the pursuit of the fourth puruṣārtha namely mokṣa. After serving society to the best of one's capacities, one has to strive for one's own salvation in the last resort seeing that society is vyāvahārika, and mukti is pāramārthika. The former is true and necessary while it lasts, but cannot commit a man to it for ever. To say this is not to assert that social obligations do not exist or can be dispensed with. They cannot, however, bind a man for all time; they have force only so long as he identifies himself with society and all that it means. A moment will and must come in the life of every person when he sees the futility of it all, when he perceives what little of human miseries another can cause or cure, and that, in the ultimate reckoning, in the perspective of other times and other attitudes, the sharpness of pain is blunted even as the fragrance of the joys fades away.

True, it has been said that *manvaseva* is *Mdhava seva* ; that service to man is true worship of God. But this applies to one who is involved in the vyāvahārika world. It is intended to rescue him from a selfish attitude whereby he places himself at the centre of the circle and expects that society should centripetally pander to his needs. Furthermore, the adventure of the spirit starts with social service of whatever nature it is, but does not stop with it. Like Ethics, Religion too is only a means to self-realisation which means the annulment of duality-consciousness.

Samadarśana which is the essential qualification for true and effective social service which springs from *sarvātmabhāva* which means seeing everything with an equal eye is the ripe fruit of the tree of self-realisation born of ātmajñāna. Says the Lord in Gītā :

sarvabhūtasthamātmānam
sarvabhūtanicātmani
īkṣate yogayuktātma
sarvatra samadarśanah.

One must be able by knowledge which has been turned into a habit to see every man, not as an

other, but as *another* imprint of the same ātman that is all men and all things. A social service that issues from such a consciousness alone is worth the name. Advaitabhāva alone can lead to effective sarvātmabhava. All else pays but lip service to a great ideal. No wonder that it fails in achieving its purpose.

The Hindus speak in terms of two purposes; One is called *abhyudaya*. It relates to material prosperity, personal and social welfare. The kāmya karmas described: in the Vedas are intended to propitiate the divinities presiding over the world and human lives and to promote their well-being. It is wrong to think that Hindu religion and philosophy are selfish and individualistic. The concern for society and its welfare are most pronounced in the practices of yajñas and yāgas which have generally a social significance and purpose, and in the acts of charity (dānas) enjoined on all grahasthas.

Much of the criticism of the Hindu way arises from contrasting it with the humanitarian activities of the Christian missionaries who run schools and colleges, hospitals, orphanages etc. Among us, these were considered to be the obliga-

tions of the State or the King and of the grahasthas, (the householders) and, in ancient times, they were discharged by them in full measure. The daily practice of the pancamahāyajñas by the Hindus is proof of their concern for general welfare down to the animals and birds. By no means were the Hindus self-regarding; they were always other-regarding. All their acts, spiritual and secular, were society-oriented. Kālidāsa speaks of the Raghu Kings who gathered wealth only to give away. The Īśa Upaniṣad abjures a man not to covet another's wealth, but to enjoy by renouncing.

But, when all is said and done, what is the final destiny of man? Alone he came into the world, and, alone, he goes out of it. To the Hindu, this life is by no means the last. He is firmly convinced that he must find a way out of the shackles of samsāra where it is not roses, roses all the way. His religion tells him that as he has had many lives in the past, he may have to go through many such in the future, if the wheel of samsāra does not stop revolving, bringing about in the process alternations of birth and death. So, apart from his obligations to society which he discharges in due time, he has *an obligation to himself* which, from

an ultimate point of view, is more paramount. Thus he must set his heart on achieving his personal liberation from samsāra to be able to attain the abiding Peace of the realisation of the Supreme Self, in whatever manner that may be understood. This is known as *nis'reys'a*; while abhyudaya is the vyāvahārika objective of every one, niśreyasa ought to be the pāramārthika objective. Having been born in this world a countless number of times, one should aspire to attain to a state where one's jīvatva is annulled and, from which, therefore, there is no return; for as children of the immortal, (amrtasya putrāh) we should strive to rise to that immortality. *Mrtyormā amratam gamaya* says the upaniṣad: Lead me from death to Immortality. This search for immortality is the duty and privilege of every human being. That is the creed of Hindu religion and philosophy. It will be as futile as it will be shortsighted to judge our faith and practices by basic concepts of other religions and other philosophies and to pronounce adversely against them.

The goal of spiritual endeavour and the way to it are succinctly laid out by Śri Śankara in a pentad of verses known as the *Upades'a Pancakam*. The goal is *parabrahmātmanāsthīyatām* i.e., being

established in Para Brahman. The separatist consciousness of jivahood must give place to the inclusive and universal consciousness that one is Brahman which is the All. Our heart and home is with Infinity and only there. When that is attained, all the knots of the heart are cut asunder, all karmas are liquidated and all doubts are removed. The dissolution of karma negates the possibility of rebirth; for, birth is the theatre for acting out results of residual karmas. Where there is no birth, there is no death again, and so, one becomes immortal. Death being dead, there is no dieing then. That is the state of liberation from the bonds of samsāra. That is mukti.

This state of mukti has a negative and a positive content. In the first instance it is release from ajñāna, the source of all sorrow and suffering. The bonds of the flesh and of all that is connected with it are sundered. One gets released from the stranglehold of samsāra and looks at the world and its doings with a resulting detachment.

Positively, mukti is being the fulness of Brahman involving a plenum of bliss and an abiding peace. It is a state of *sāntam, śivam, advaitam.* The possibility of such an attainment

and the fact of it are to be accepted from the declarations of śruti which is the source of the knowledge of the supersensuous, and they have been certified in the experience of the jīvanmuktas.

By its very nature, mukti is not for all and sundry. It is the final stage of a spiritual adventure, more determined, more arduous and, because of that, more rewarding than any adventure on the physical plane. According to Advaita Vedānta mukti has to be *won*; it is never given. For the removal of ajñāna which is the *sine qua non* of mukti cannot be done for a man by another. I cannot get rid of my disease if another person drinks the medicine for it. *Ajñānanivrtti* is one's own achievement. Even the guru can only point the way. He can only declare the truth as an upadeśa; but it is the pupil that must meditate on it and realise it in his consciousness and transmute it himself into a *fact of his own experience*.

In the *Upades'apancaka*, Śri Śankara details the way to this Advaitic goal. In the Hindu view there is what is known as the concept of the *adhikāri*. There are both inherent and acquired qualifications for every pursuit, physical, mental or spiritual. The Hindu scheme does not believe

in every person being fit for anything under the sun. According to it, every man accumulates through the lives that he has lived in the past certain *vāsanas* or tendencies which are lodged in his psycho-physical personality which fit or unfit him for specific avocations. These vāśanas have special validity in the spiritual realm whatever their relevancy in the world of material achievements. Consequently, spiritual endeavour which will have its consummation in Advaitic realisation is only for a select few who are qualified for it and who go through certain disciplines.

Starting with karma, the Upadeśapañcaka ends with a stage when there will be no occasion for any karma. Śri Śankara develops a technique of moral, mental, and spiritual education which is perfectly suited to Advaitic quest. The first and foremost requirement is to discharge from a knowledge of the Vedas the obligations of prescribed action which have both a personal and social orientation. But they must be done not for the attainment of any worldly purpose. The discipline of these karmas bends the body and binds the will to a habit of concentration. As such kārmic activity is practically a whole-time job, there is little time or inclination for the person to indulge

in impure and unwholesome thoughts and actions. And, when karma is performed with a sense of dedication, God is pleased and it acquires a sanctity of its own. The grace of God tends to wash off all impurities of the mind and the body.

But karma is not to be a life-long activity. Apart from sinful deeds, even meritorious actions which give physical joys are frought with danger. They perpetuate the cycle of life and will not conduce to release from it. While evil karma forges an iron chain, good karma fashions a golden chain; but both are chains which bind a man to life. So one should learn to cast off all worldly pleasures and cultivate the desire for ātmajñāna. When this takes hold of a man, he sees that karma is an impediment on his way and takes to a condition when karma ceases to be obligatory. This is preceded by a sense of detachment from worldly pursuits and a climate of vairāgya is developed in the mind. When one thus gets detached, that is the very moment to quit the home and take up samnyāsa. This is called *vividiṣā samnyāsa*,, assuming the order to qualify for Brahmavicāra untrammelled by the obligations to perform karma, and without the cares of a family life. Freed from the obligation to do karmas, such a person can

concentrate on Brahmavicāra, making it a whole-time pursuit.

The vividiṣā sanyāsin lives in the midst of like-minded good men and invokes the grace of God by his devotional practices. His devotion fructifies in the appearance of a guru to whom he goes with due humility and whom he pleases with appropriate service. He seeks from such a one who is a Brahmavit (one who has known and realised Brahman) instruction in the *prvaṇava-mantra* which is compendious expression of the supreme wisdom. He listens to the exposition of the upaniṣads and engages himself in understanding the intricacies of their significance. Getting steeped in that lore, he abandons all wasteful disquisitions and learns to appreciate the meaning of the sacred texts.

Gradually, he begins to divest himself of wrong identification with the body and learns that he is Brahman in essence. Accepting the findings of the wise, he desists from controverting their utterances. As a samnyāsi, he lives on alms poured into his hands, avoiding all that panders to the taste. Accepting what chance brings to him, he eats food only as a medicine to appease his hunger.

Accustoming his body to bear the dualities of cold and heat, he does not indulge in profitless talk. Subordinating his ego to the extent of even being treated with indifference, such a one is unaffected by praise and blame. He seeks solitude and engages himself in undistracted contemplation of Brahman. He habituates himself to the truth that the world and its objects are but projections of this foundational Reality.

Upon the dawn of this enlightenment, all his unsprouted actions of this or former births are scotched like seeds over a fire, and he steadfastly desists from any future binding karma. He, however, suffers the effects of such karmas that have begun to bear firuit and, the while, lives on as a jīvanmukta firmly established in Brahman.

Thus does Śri Śankara mark the milestones on the *mumukṣu's* march to mukti. The road to be traversed is hard and arduous and demands the greatest travails of the flesh for the ultimate triumph of the Spirit. Obviously, this way known *jñānamarga* is not for the weak or the halting. The upaniṣad says that a rare brave man (*kascit dhīrah*) looks into himself to discover his ātman as against a multitude who look outward sending

their senses, as the 'Self-born' (*svayambūh*) ordained them, towards the things of the world. The word used for such a man is *dhīra*, which means one who is both brave and wise. The way of wisdom calls for the greatest daring; but, terrific as the adventure is, the final victory ends in superlative beatitude.

It is customary to condemn the jñānamarga for its difficulty and to speak of *bhaktimārga* or the way of devotion as by far easier and as quicker of fulfilment. Mistaken as a concession to the frailty of man in these decadent days, reflection will show that bhaktimārga too demands sacrifices and privations no less exacting. The greatest saints of religion of every faith have been known for their complete renunciation of everything that binds them to the world. Real vairāgya is a mental condition which few can cultivate to perfection. The moral qualification of bhaktimārga are equally uncompromising. A Tamil saint bewails that his tongue is not fit even to utter the name of God. *Nāmasankīrtana* as the way to God is not so easy as it is made out to be. It requires an orientation of the mind, whole and entire, to the Supreme free from the seductions of the world. One must be dead to the world to be able to live in God. How

many of ordinary men will be able or willing to satisfy this condition?

Taking the qualifications prescribed by Visiṣṭādvaitic religion for salvation, or *prapatti*, it will be found that they are such as will be possible for only very gifted souls to acquire. The first is *ānukulya sankalpa*, acquiring merit favourable to a godly life and *prātikūlya varjanam* which is avoiding those which will have a contrary effect. Both require a strength of will not available to ordinary mortals subject to the temptations of the flesh. The suppression of the ego signified by *ākincinyam* or *kārpanyānusandhāṇam* is no easy achievement. *Goptṛtvavaraṇam* and *rakṣisyati iti mahāviśvasah*, which go together stand for seeking the Protector coupled with an absolute faith that He would protect. Faith in spiritual matters requires a greater strength of mind than Reason; for while the latter provides for doubt and disbelief if only to surmount them later, the former exacts an allegiance that gives no quarter to these disturbances of the intellect. Faith demands a strength of will which does not admit of any kind of pusillanimity or vascillation. *Bharasamarpaṇam* is laying at the feet of the Lord the load of the sins that one has committed and praying for His forgiveness and

their eventual liquidation. The responsibility of the devotee begins as a matter of fact only after bharasamarpaṇam. It does not make for a moral holiday thereafter during which, for the rest of his life, he can act as he pleases. Bharasamarpaṇam is conceived of as a means to dissolve the past moral lapses and failings, but it cannot immunise a man from future evil deeds. The person who has performed bharasamarpaṇam is on his trial for the rest of his life and has to be for ever watchful of his moral steps. The last of the means is *ātmanivedanam*, the surrender of one's self whole and entire to God, saying 'not I, but Thou'. This implies a total abnegation of dehātma-buddhi and of the seeming separateness of man from God. It expresses itself in the words 'I am Thine'. It is an affirmation that one's destiny is in God's keeping to whom surrender is made which is as complete as it is unreserved. *Prapatti* is a great spiritual act involving superior wisdom, a rare courage and an unflinching determination not available to ordinary mortals. It is not a mere formal rite; it is a fateful decision.

Thus the way of devotion is no less arduous and exacting than the way of knowledge and it is puerile to say that one is easier than the other.

Both require mental and moral disciplines which overlap and are valid for the one as for the other. In the earlier stages, there may be a difference of approach. By jñānamarga one achieves liberation by the removal of ajñāna; by bhaktimārga one receives salvation by the conferment of anugṛaha. The consequence of both is freedom from samsāra.

XI. SOME MISUNDERSTANDING OF ADVAITA

The first misunderstanding is that Śri Śankara is the *propounder* of Advaita Vedānta. It is wrongly called *Śankara's* Advaita. He only expounds what is detailed in the *Upaniṣads*, explained in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and in the *Brahma Sūtras*. He frequently refers to his exposition as *aupaniṣadam s'āstram*. There have been many teachers of Advaita before him as there have been since his time. His exposition has acquired the distinction of a classic by reason of its inescapable logic, marvellous lucidity and the masterly way in which he demolishes contrary viewe and establishes the Advaitic position. Among the schools of Vedānta, Advaita is chronologically the first and by Sri Śankara it has been established to be the logically the highest.

2. In the *Upaniṣads*, there are statements which speak of monistic unity in the last resort, and others which seem to support the doctrines of duality and plurality. There are *abheda s'rutis* which express non-difference between the jīvātman and the Paramātman and there are *bheda s'urtis* which imply difference between them. There are

declarations about the Absolute Brahman as qualitiless, inactive etc,, and others which associate qualities with Brahman, and the activities of creation, preservation and destruction. Again some statements prescribe the way of transcendental knowledge to attain the Highest while others prescribe devotion and action. The charge is laid on Advaita Vedānta that the latter in each of these pairs of statements is made to imply a secondary meaning and the primacy is given to the former. The *ābheda s'rutis* have a transcendental import while the *bheda s'rutis* have only an empirical import in reference to the world of experience. It is argued that this distinction between the transcendental and the empirical, (the pārāmārthikā and the vyāvahārika realms) in Advaita Vedanta has no justification. An examination of the expositions of the other schools of Vedānta will show that they have to strain to explain the *abheda śrutis* from their point of view while no such difficulty is seen for the Advaitin in respect of the *bheda śrutis*. Other schools have to explain away the abheda srutis, But Advaita Vedānta explains both the abheda and the bheda srutis as they stand in the contexts in which they appear.

3. The charge is made that Advaita Vedanta has no place for God, that He is relegated to an inferior place *vis-a-vis* the nirguṇa Brahman, and so, the system cannot satisfy the urge for religion, This charge is mixed up with another that jnāna is declared to be the final means of liberation and that bhakti and karma have only a secondary place as means to jñāna. If it is granted that bondage in śamsāra is due to wrong idea of one's true nature, then it must follow that jñāna which dispels that wrong idea is the only effective means to get out of that bondage. Such jñāna is not to be had by all and sundry; but only by such as have the qualification for it and endeavour towards it in the prescribed ways. The preliminaries to the attainment of such jñāna are a mind purified by the *samskāras* of karma and informed by instruction by a guru. One has to acquire the grace of God to be endowed with the urge for Advaita jñāna. One must endear oneself to God by intense devotion to Him. He then appears in the form of a guru who then dowers the pupil with instruction.

The first of this two-fold charge that in Advaita Vedanta God is made out to be inferior to Brahman has to be understood properly. The abheda srutis speak of Brahman as formless, name-

less, qualitiless and actionless etc. As such, obviously it cannot perform the creation etc., of the world which are associated with the theistic conception of the Supreme as God. Parabrahmam is *guṇātītam*, beyond Prakrti and its guṇas. Creation etc., are activities concerned with Prakrti and determined by the guṇas. The Absolute Reality which is Brahman is beyond Good and Evil; that is why it is spoken of as nirguṇa. The world, however, is compacted of good and evil differently proportioned. The effectuation of the world requires an agency which can work with the instruments of the guṇas, yet possessing mastery over them. The Absolute must be conceived as stepping down, as it were from it nirguṇa eminence, to consort with māyā spelt in the form of the guṇas, to be invested with a Name and Form, and with powers to start the processes of creation etc. By this, the nirguṇa Brahma which is pāramārthika, transcendent, is viewed through vyāvahārika glasses and appears as Saguṇa Brahman and is called Īśvara or God. To the ordinary mortal who could neither conceive nor realise Brahman in Its nirguṇa essence, saguṇa Brahman is the highest object of conception, meditation and devotion. The believer in Advaita Vedānta who has not acquired Advaitic anubhava is in no way inferior.

to the vedāntins of other schools in his allegiance to the God of his conception, in the fervour of his devotion or in the intensity of his religious practices. One who not having attained to pāramārthika anubhava, looks upon Īśvara as inferior to nirguṇa Brahman will be a fool for his pains. Religion and the God of religion are very real and ultimate to him who is not a Brahmavit in the true Advaitic sense of that term. That is why Śri Śankara sanctified places of worship of saguṇa Brahman in different sacred spots of our land, re-established and purified the six ways of worship of the Supreme God and sang hymns in praise of His different manifestations. In this aspect Sri Śankara is a theist *par excellence* whose devotion is inclusive cutting across sectarian distinctions and divisions.

Great Advaitins who came after Sri Sankara have been devout bhaktas of God in one of the other of His manifestations. Sri Madhusūdhana Śarasvati, the author of the *Advaita Siddhi* was a Kriṣna bhakta. Sri Sadāśiva Brahmendra who adorned the Kāmākoti Pīṭa established by Śri Śankara and whose *advaitānubhava* was incomparable was a devotee of Rāma. Mūkakavi, another occupant of this Pīta sang five hundred verses in

praise of the Goddess Sri Kāmākṣi. Sri Appayya Dīkṣitā, another protagonist of Advaita was a great Śivabhakta. Sri Rāmakriṣna Paramahamsa who habitually lapsed into advaitic samādhi was a peerless worshipper of Kāli the Mother. The fact declared in the *Śankaravijayas* and vouched by tradition that Sri Śankara brought five *spaṭika-lingas* from Kailas and consecrated them for worship by his monastic successors in Kedarnath, Paśupatinath, Sringeri and Kānci and in the temple at Chidambaram is disproof of this charge against Advaita Vedānta.

4. Theistic philosophers which think in terms of salvation of the soul and its reaching a heavenly abode enjoying ecstatic bliss basking in the sunshine of divine grace in God's immediate presence are alarmed at the supposed negation of personality in the ultimate heights of Advaitic Brahmānubhava. Some earnest devotees of God would even prefer to live in this world, if possible, for ever, feasting their physical eyes in the solidified superlative beauty of God's Images which they worship in temples rather than going to the abode of God in Vaikunta. Understandable as this attitude is from the point of view of theistic religion and philosophy, it has no relevance when looked

at from the Advaitic point of view. On that basis, no man had a distinctive individuality or personality of his own to 'lose' it in Brahmānubhava. Any feeling of this distinctiveness and the fear of losing it are both groundless. As a matter of metaphysical fact, no man has an individuality or personality apart from Brahman. It is only under the influence of ajñāna that one thinks of himself as an individual entity. It is this supposed individuality that is 'lost' in ultimate Brahmānubhava. No one need grieve over the 'loss' of what never existed. Far from being a loss, it is a regaining of one's true nature. According to Advaita Vedānta, everything that is in the vyāvahārika realm vanishes in the pāramārthika anubhava. Distinction of individuality or personality is a vyāvahārika category which has no meaning in the pāramārthika state.

The culmination of religion is mystic union. The fullness of this union is commensurate with the annulment of distinction between the factors entering into the union. On the principle of fulfilment by negation, in mystic union the devotee loses all consciousness of himself as a separate entity and merges in God. In the merging, his individuality disappears and he loses himself in his God. The *union* becomes a *unity*. Thus the

highest in religion is also the highest in philosophy.

5. It is alleged that jīvanmukti is a contradiction in terms, that jīvahood is bondage, and mukti is liberation, and that bondage and liberation are, to borrow the language of Sri Śankara in another context, of irreconcilable natures like darkness and light. It has been shown earlier that on the Advaita Vedānta premise of ajñāna being the cause of bondage, the freedom from it through jñāna can and may be acquired in this life. This is no inherent contradiction in living in the present physical body as a mukta. The man of steadfast wisdom, the *sthitaprajña* of the Gītā, is a serene person unattached to and unaffected by the dualities of physical life. A jīvanmukta is *in* the body, but not *of* it. That this is possible has been vouched for by many a jīvanmukta who has blazed the trail of spiritual enlightenment.

6. "Is it not the height of arrogance for finite man to declare his identity with God? How can the finite be the same as the Infinite?" That is a question asked of the Advaitin. This accusation arises from a thorough misunderstanding of the Advaitic interpretation of *tattvamasi* and *aham-*

brahmāsmi. The Advaitin does not equate himself of little knowledge and limited powers with God of infinite knowledge and unlimited powers. The 'aham' in *ahambrahmāsmi* does not refer to man in his upadhi-ridden condition, but to his realisation of himself divested of upādhis. In the latter aspect, as pure sat, cit and ānada, his pratyagātman is declared to be non-different from the Supreme Brahman whose nature also is sat, cit and ānanda. Far from being a sign of arrogance, in the lips of the Advaitin who speaks from Brahmānubhava, it is a statement of a great truth.

7. A reproach hurled against Śri Śankara is that he is a Buddhist in disguise (a *praccanna-bauddha*). That is based on the view that Advaita Vedānta is Buddhism at its core, that Advaitic Brahmānubhava is only Buddhist Nirvāṇa, that Māyāvāda and Sūnyavāda are kin to each other, and that Advaita is as godless as Buddhism is. It is a travesty to accuse such a great intellectual as Śri Śankara of appearing as a concealed Buddhist. His insistence on the authority of śruti as the ultimate ground of Advaita Vedānta, on the sanctity of the karmas prescribed by the sāstras as the first step in the spiritual ladder, on devotion to a personal God to earn His grace must all pro-

vide effective refutation of this charge. Moreover, the *anātmavāda* of Buddhism is diametrically opposed to *ātmavāda* of Advaita Vedānta which rests on the fact of the ātman as a spiritual entity. Brahmānubhava of Advaita is as far removed from the Buddhistic Nivāṇa as Infinity is from zero; the one is a plenary bliss with a positive content while the latter for aught one knows seems to be a contentless void.

8. Finally, a curious and patently wrong view of Advaita Vedānta may be noticed if only to be summarily dismissed. It has been alleged that Śri Śankara got the inspiration for his Advaita from the Monotheism of Mohammed. Apart from ignoring the fact that Advaita Vedānta has upaniṣadic origins and is to be traced to a period earlier than Śri Śankara's, or of the Prophet Mahommed, this view doest not distinguish between the Monotheism of Islam and the Monism of Advaita. Islam is an ethical religion while Advaita Vedānta is a metaphysical system. Even accepting the historical date of Śri Śankara, he went away from Kerala even when young and could have had no opportunity to come into contact with Mahommed's teachings carried to the West coast of India by Arab traders to be influenced by him. The Mahommedan

religion is iconoclastic doing away with idols and their worship, while Śri Śankara established places of worship and installed and sanctified idols in them. This tendency to see the influence of Islam in Advaita is of a piece with another which says that Visiṣṭādvaita as a religious philosophy has borrowed its tenets largely from Christianity. One wonders if Sri Rāmānuja would have ever heard the name of Christ when writing his Śri Bhāṣya.

XII. CONCLUSION

Of the several schools of Vedānta, the Advaita, Vedānta is chronologically the earliest. Idealistic monism has been the predominant trend of philosophical thought at all times and among all peoples. This has been particularly pronounced in India from the distant past. This is in response to the innate urge to discover the ultimate source of the universe and to find the manifestation of the One in the Many which constitute that universe. It is in this direction that scientific investigation has been developing in modern times with the result that the objeetive world is tending to disappear in the region of the spirit. Science is now moving towards the acceptance of something non-material as the ultimate Reality. The sense of synthesis is compelling scientists to discover a monistic unity back of the diversity of physical phenomena.

The following observations of leading scientists of today bear out the fact that the current theories of modern physics have developed an idealistic trend in line with the the truths of Advaita Vedānta. Quoted from Puragra Parampathi's *Advaita and Modern Physics* :

Sir James Jeans: "The Law and Order which we find in the universe are most easily described and also I think most easily explained in the language of idealism."

L. Barnett: "In trying to distinguish appearance from reality and lay bare the fundamental structure of the universe science has had to transcend the 'rabble of sense' "

C. E. M. Joad: ". . . the views of Eddington of Jeans and of Russel, as also, I am led to understand those of Einstein and Planck—all uphold the traditional distinction of appearance and reality."

As Purampanthi puts it 'the twentieth century science today touches the realm of Advaita Vedānta and shakes hands with monistic idealism.' The theories of relativity and the new quantum theory have given a death blow to a mechanical explantion of the universe. The view of the finality of matter has been superseded by the researches in atomic physics and by the concept of energy as both the determinant and the constituent of the material world.

The 'independence' of the objective world apart from the contemplating subject has been

exploded as a myth. In modern Physics and Psychology, more and more importance is given to the subjective element with the result that in line with the Indian theory of *dṛiṣṭisṛṣṭi vāda*, it is beginning to be held that mind makes matter. The Vedāntic truth that ultimate Reality is of the nature of *cit* is getting corroborated by the scientific ardour for harmony in accord with the principle of Intelligence as the ground of the universe. The difference between the modern science approach to the problem of Reality and the Vedāntic approach to it is that, whereas the former works up from the base to the apex, from the manifold of material phenomena to a unitary spiritual principle, the latter first intuited this spiritual Truth and displayed its manifestation in the realm of phenomenal variety. Vedānta declares: "Existence (sat) alone was in the beginning, dear one, one only without a second. It thought and (said to itself): 'May I become many'" How the primal One came to manifest itself as the Many is the dissertation of Vedānta. Science takes the opposite (but complementary) course of reaching to the transcendental One from the empirical many. Giving up a purely mechanical understanding of the universe, it has come to adopt a conceptualist

view. To quote Parampanthi again: "The abundance of scientific data, collected through painstaking experiments exhibits the intricate, amazingly harmonious and uniform pattern of the universe and compels the scientist to envisage it as an elaborate manifestation of a subtle mathematical Mind."

So far regarding Nature. Turning to Man, it has been shown earlier that essentially he is constituted of pure intelligence which tenants a bodily configuration for its revelation and its activity. The analogy of the horses, the reins, the chariot and the charioteer in the Kaṭopaniṣad conclusively shows the importance of the intellect in the governance of man. This intellect functioning as a reflection in the antahkaraṇa points to its original as the pure cit embedded in the inmost recess of the individual as the pratyagātman. All systems of ethics and all forms of religion worth the name subordinate action and emotion to the empire of the intellect in the affairs of man. The discovery of the ground of our being and the goal of our becoming must determine the direction of our feelings and wills to a properly co-ordinated life. The rule of reason in the role that man has to play in this vale of soul-making cannot be gain-

said. To criticise Advaita Vedānta that it overrates the function of reason at the expense of the emotions and the will is to forget the native excellence of man which takes him nearest to God, establishing a kinship which is really an identity. In its explorations into the realm of extra-sensory perception modern psychology is providing marvellous confirmations of yogic experiences in which thought as such untrammelled by its physical apparatus and disengaged from objects is able to function establishing a community of minds as expressions of One universal Mind.

Thus while on the one hand under the impact of modern physics matter is getting more spiritualised, current psychological trends are breaking the walls dividing human minds and look upon them as particularised editions of a transcendental Intelligence. These truths were enshrined in the deliverences of our Vedic seers and expounded at length in the discussions of the upaniṣads long before historical philosophers began to speculate about these problems.

It is worthy of note that, in the history of Indian thought, every system of philosophy, and particularly Vedāntic schools other than Advaita, have crossed swords with Advaita Vedānta. In

almost every case, each system contests the views of Advaita Vedānta on Epistemology and Theory of Knowledge, Cosmology, Religion and Ontology. The Advaitic view is invariably the *purvapakasa* which is contested by the proponents of the respective theories. But interestingly enough, Advaita Vedanta has no quarrel with any of them. It accommodates them all in its grand design on the basis of adhikāribheda and of the distinction between pāramārthika and vyāvahārika. Dvaita, Visiṣṭādvaita and other schools of Vedānta may be considered to be stages in the soul's quest of the Absolute and of the realisation of its oneness with It. Thus Advaita is an inclusive philosophy giving each theory its proper place and significance.

This accommodative inclusiveness of Advaita Vedānta is particularly evident in the outstanding success in religious sythesis achived by Śri Śankara. In his day, in the realm of religion, India presen ted a dome of many coloured sects which stained the white radiance of true devotion. Warring creeds of dubious practices calculated to entangle the mind without elevating it, clamoured for man's allegiance, enslaved the human spirit and degraded the human soul. We owe it to Śri Śankara that, motived by his Advaitic temper, he purged

religious sects of their imperfections and, instead of doing away with them, subjecting them to a clearing process, he raised them to a pedestal of worshipful dignity. The result of this ṣanmatasthāpana was that other religious prophets that came aftest Śri Śankara did not have to clear the morass of imperfect and injurious faiths from the paths of Vedāntic quest. Advaita Vedānta is a harmonious and convincing blend of the best thought of the land accommodating every faith and doctrine consistent with its relative worth and purpose. In the edifice of Advaita, every school of thought and action finds a niche for itself appropriate to its character and determined by its limitations.

Advaita and Abhaya go together. *Dvaitādvaivai bhayam bhavati* says the upaniṣed. Differentiation puts people into opposite camps and leads to animosities and quarrels. Dvaitabhāvana is at the root of dveṣa (hatred) which springs from bhaya (fear). The ills of life, its sorrows and sufferings are to be traced to duality consciousness. He who sees oneness everywhere has no cause for delusionor grief. If the One World idea of the unity of Man is to be achieved at all, it can only be on the foundation of Advaitic consciousness. If, as the UNESCO

founding fathers said 'the roots of war are to be traced to the minds of men', such minds are infected by the sense of duality which breeds opposition. Advaita teaches the oneness with the whole of Nature and with other men since both are but phenomenal appearances of the One Reality. The significances of Advaita as an attitude of mind and as a rule of life are infinite. Not mere fraternity, but identity alone will make me look on my neighbour as myself, for, according to Advaita, and to the principle that things equal to the something are equal to each other, I am Brahman; my neightbour is Brahman; ergo He is I. When this logic is verified by anubhava of a transcendental kind, Christ's teaching gets certified as a maxim of conduct. If the disputes at all levels of private and public life, at the intranational and international levels should give way to harmony and peace, the dominant philosophy should be determined by Advaita Vedānta which alone can bring about union of hearts through unity of the soul.

The adventure of Advaita is as daring in its aspiration as it is triumphant in its achievement. Its truth has been declared unequivocally by śruti, proved beyond doubt by reason and certified in the

lives of realised souls. The equation of man with God, of the jīvātman with the Paramātman, in the ecstatic experience which finds utterance in the words 'I am Brahman', *aham brahmāsmi* is an ancient and eternal Truth echoed in the lips of Jesus when he said 'I and my Father are one'. Human life is the laboratory where each individual tries to discover it and realise it in himself. This experiment is picturesquely illustrated in the parable of the two birds is the Māṇḍūkya upani sad which Swāmi Vivekānanda describes as follows in his own inimitable way :

> "Upon the same tree there are two birds, one on the top, the other below. The one on the top is calm, silent, and majestic, imersed in his own glory; the one on the lower branches, eating sweet and bitter fruits by turns, hopping from branch to branch, is becoming happy and miserable by turns. After a time the lower bird eats an exceptionally bitter fruit and gets disgusted and looks up and sees the other bird, that wondrous one of golden plumage, who eats neither sweet nor bitter fruit, who is neither happy nor miserable, but calm, self-centred, and

sees nothing beyond his Self. The lower bird longs for this condition, but soon forgets it, and again begins to eat the fruit. In a little while, he eats another exceptionally bitter fruit, which makes him feel miserable, and he again looks up, and tries to get nearer to the upper bird. Once more he forgets and after a time he looks up, and so on he goes again and again and again until he comes very near to the beautiful bird and sees the reflection of light from his plumage playing around his own body, and he feels a change and seems to melt away; still nearer he comes, and everything about him melts away, and at last he understands this wonderful change. The lower bird was, as it were, only the substantial-looking shadow, the reflection of the higher; he himself was in essence the upper bird all the time. This eating of fruits, sweet and bitter, this lower, little bird, weeping and happy by turns, was a vain chimera, a dream: all along, the real bird was there above, calm and silent, glorious and majestic,

beyond grief, beyond sorrow. The upper bird is God, the Lord of this universe, and the lower bird is the human soul, eating the sweet and bitter fruits of this world. Now and then comes a heavy blow to the soul. For a time, he stops the eating and goes towards the unknown God, and a flood of light comes. He thinks that this world is a vain show. Yet again the senses drag him down, and he begins as before to eat the sweet and bitter fruits of the world. Again an exceptionally hard blow comes. His heart becomes open again to divine light; thus gradually he approaches God, and as he gets nearer, he find his old self melting away. When he has come near enough he sees that he is no other than God, and he exclaims, "He whom I have described to you as the Life of this universe, as present in the atom, and in suns and moons - He is the basis of our own life, the Soul of our soul. Nay, thou art That".

It is this grand Truth of Advaita variously expressed in the springs of our philosophy and religion that was expounded by Bhagavān Śri

Śankara. His marvellous intellect distilled out of the tripod of our scriptures a school of philosophy of great speculative daring and logical subtlety. Alike by its throughness and its profundity, Advaita Vedānta has been unique in its conception. We have the authority of the illustrious line of his disciples that, to a wise and initiated mind instinct with faith, guided by discipline and held by devotion, the system detailed by Śri Śankara is grounded on *śāstra*, proved by *yukti* and confirmed by *anubhava*.

Śri Śankara has left witnesses to his teaching of the Advaitic truth who have followed through the years in the trail that he blazed forth. That this great and grand philosophy may endure for all time in the minds of men who may draw inspiration from it alike in matters mundane and spiritual, he established pontificates in several parts of our couutry to propagate the Message of Advaita. Lapse of time and the conscription of circumstances may have debilitated the less prosperous and the less powerful among these; but still not a few function as powerful beacons of this great system shedding their light far afield both at home and abroad. Among these are the classical pontificates that the great Āchārya established at Jyothir Math.

Dwāraka, Pūri, Sringeri and Kānci. Each of these has had a succession of illustrious, learned and saintly personages who presided over them to reclaim man from his sin, suffering and sorrow and to confer on him his inheritance of immortality, whence, once attained, the Śruti declares, there is no return.

OM TAT SAT

APPENDICES

ADVAITA IN THE VEDAS

[Summarised from the articles on the Subject in Sanskrit in the "Advaitākṣaramālikā" published by the Kāmakoti Kaśāsthān, Madras.]

Śri Śankara speaks of Advaita Vedānta as *aupaniṣadam s'āstram*, a śāstra that is based on the teaching of the Upaniṣads. The Vedas or śrutis are distinguished into two parts, the karma kāṇda and the jñānakāṇda, the former dealing ritualistic practices, their procedure and purposes, the latter with discussions on metaphysical subjects including Nature, Man and God. The upaniṣads belong to the second part and are known as *s'rutisiras*, the highest reaches of the Vedas.

The truths of Advaita are discernible in both the parts of the Vedas. An attempt is here made to refer to some of them.

In the 5th khaṇda of the 3rd adhyāya of the Aitareya upaniṣad of the Ṛg. Veda there is an enquiry into the nature of the ātman. *Koyamātmeti vayam upāsmahe? Katarah sa ātmā.* The reply is given: That by which one sees, hears,

smells, speaks and tastes. It ends with statements meaning that everything is established *prajñāna*. All the psychological functions of a man are said to be the several names of prajñāna: *sarvāṇyeivetāni prajñānasya nāmadheyāni bhavanti*. It proceeds to show that even physical objects are all established in prajñāna: *prajñāne pratiṣṭitam prajnā netro lokahpragña pratiṣṭā*. By the word *prajñānam Brahma*, an identity is established between the jīvātman shorn of its physical activities of seeing, hearing etc., and the nirviseṣa Brahman. Showing that the jīva himself is of the nature of prajñāna, it is taught that the Paramātma is non-different from the jīvātma.

Such non-difference between jīva and Brahmam was experienced by the Sage Vāmadeva who exclaims:

III. vi-xvi. aham manurabhavam sūryascāhamkakṣīvān ṛṣirasmi viprah. aham kutsamārjuneyam nymryjeham kaviruśana paśyatāmā.

III. vi. xv. 2. aham bhūmimadadamāryā yāham dṛṣtim dāsuṣe martyāya ahamāpo anayam vaıa sanāmamedavāso anuketamāyan.

III. vi. 15. 3. aham puro mandasānovyairanavasākam navatīh sāmbarasya satatamam ves'yam sarvatā tā divodāsamatithigvam yadāve.

III. vi. 16. 1. garbhe nu sannaveṣāmavedam—aham devānām jānimāni vis'vā s'atam mā pura āyasirrakṣanndhah śyeno jīvasā niradīyam.

The first three of the foregoing ṛks show that Vāmadeva attained to an experience of identity with all selves by reason of his ātmajñāna. The fourth refers to his awareness of being Brahman and to the fact of his knowing the origin of all the devas by virtue of his non-difference from Brahman. He also says in the last ṛk that before his Brahmajñāna, he got into countless forms which chained him to the world, and that after the dawn of jñāna, he was released from bondage. The substance of this mantra is also conveyed in the first adhyāya of the fourth Brāhmaṇa of the Bṛhadarāṇyakopaniṣad as under: *taddhaitat pasyanrṣir vāmadevah pratipedeham manurabhavam sūryasceti.*

III. iii. 22–0. indram mitram varuṇamagnimahurātho divyah susuparno garutmān

ekamsadviprā bhudhā vadantyagnim yamam mātaris'vānamāhuh

proclaims that the one Brahman appears as the many and that that which exists is one, but that sages speak of it in many forms. The one identical Reality is spoken of by different names.

VII. vii. 17-1. nāsadasīnnosadāsittadānīm nāsidrajo no vyomaparo yat. kimāvarīvah kuhakasya sarmannambhah kimāsīd gahanam gabhīram.

The question here is: what is the material cause (upādānakāraṇa) of the perceivable jagat? Pure Brahman cannot be said to be the material cause as it is actionless. It must be something different from Brahman. Is that asat or sat? It cannot be asat because like a skyflower, it has no existence. What is antyantāsat cannot be an upādānakāraṇa. It cannot be the sat too; for there can be no sat other than the pure Brahman. Therefore, the material cause must be something different both from sat and from asat. That is called māyā.

VII. vii. 17-1. na mrtyurāsīḍamṛtam na tarhi na rātryā anha asītpraketah ānīdavātam

svadhayā tadekam tasmaddhanyanna parah kincana āsa.

Every jīva is really Brahman. Due to ajñāna be believes he is in bondage and that he *aitains* mokṣa. To talk of bandha and mokṣa in respect of non-attainment of Brahman is only a play on words. We speak of the rising and setting sun from our point of view. But the sun is ever shining.

But, how to account for this jīvāhood? The mantra says: *ānīdavatam svādhayā tadekam.* There is no connection with prāṇa in the suddha Brahman. So, it is the offspring of māyā, and Brahman so associated with māyā became Hiraṇyagarbha. There was nothing other than that. Enveloped by māyā it appeared as the jīva.

VII. vii. 17. 31. tama āsīttamasā gūṭamagre praketam salilam sarvamā idam tucchayenābhvapihitam yadāsīt tapasastanmahīnajayataikam.

VIII. vii. 11. 47. kāmastadagre samavartatādhi manaso retah prathamam yadāsīt sato bandhumasati niravindanhrdi pratīṣyā kavayo manīṣā.

The first mantra says that bhāvarūpa ajñāna had its adhiṣṭāna in Brahman. During praḷaya, it engulfed and concealed everything and was in the form of the subtle universe. Everything was enveloped in darkness of māyā and could not be clearly seen in its real nature as pure milk cannot be seen when it is diluted with water. Yet, the world was projected by Brahman by its māyā through its tapas which issued out in the will expressed in the words : May I become Many.

The second mantra answers the question how the actionless Brahman could become active and create the world. During praḷaya, the seeds of the effects of meritorious and other actions imbedded in all creatures are in a state being about to sprout; and then arose in the mind of Parameśvara the desire to create. Then He creates and a new kalpa begings.

VIII. iii. 17. 7. natam vidātha ya imā jajānanyudyuṣmākamantaram babhūva. nīhāreṇa prāvrtā jalpyā casutrpa ukthas'ascaranti.

VIII. iv. 17-2. puruṣa evedam sarvam yadbhūtam yacca bhavyam;

shows that the universe in all periods of time, past, present and future is the Puruṣa, the Supreme

Brahman and thus supports the truth of the qualitiless Brahman without a second.

This mantra answers the query: If all of us are Brahman, why do we not realise it here and now? The answer is *anyadyusmākamantaram babhūva*. That is because of something which stands between you both. You are concealed by ajñāna as by a mist. And, you wrongly emphasise your ego. Egoistic minded, not realising that you are already and always Brahman, you indulge in various kinds of sacrifices prompted by a sense of duality. So, you do not gain awareness of yourself as Brahman. Thus ajñāna, concealment of real nature by it, cancellation of that concealment and the dawn of true self-consciousness are all indicated by this mantra.

VIII. vi. 16-3. is an interesting mantra relating to the construction of the sacrifical altar. Understood in terms of Jñānakāṇḍa, it describes the nature of māyā.

> *catuṣkapardā yuvatissupeśā ghṛtapratīkā vayunāni vaste. tasyamsuparṇā vṛṣanā niṣedaturyatra devā dadhire bhāgadeyam.*

There are said to be four excellences in māya spoken of as a damsel. She is said to be a *yuvatih*,

supeśā, ghrtapratīkā, vayunāni. The first excellence is that she is young and attractive. She never grows old. Being ever young, she functions with undiminished vigour in every jīva. This means that all through life a man is under the sway of māyā who entices him with undiminishing attractiveness.

The second excellence is that she is *supeśa*, ever clever and skillful. She has the skill to produce to our perception even the most unimaginable forms. She possesses what is called *aghatitaghtanasāmarthya.* There is no limit to the nature of things and forms projected by māyā, to their number and to their variety.

The third excellence is *ghṛtapratīkā* i.e. having the resemblance to *ghṛta* or ghee which is sweet to eat but later turns out to be ill-suited to health. Māyā too though appearing desirable at first later brings about entanglements which are fraught with evil.

Fourthly, she is an adept in concealment. She hides from us the fact of the ultimate Reality by her concealing power. In this māyā of fourfold excellences the jīva is caught up. By this māyā the sense organs function in respect of

objects appropriate to them. Without the help of māyā, they cannot draw the senses to their objects.

VIII. vi. 16-4. ekassuparnah sasamudramāviveśa sa idam viśvam bhuvanam viceṣte. tam pākena manasā paśyamantimtatastaṁ mātā ronhi sa u ronhi mātaram. suparṇam viprāh kavayo vacobhirekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti.

Between the jīva and Paramātma, the Paramātma is one only and unattached. Jīva is immersed in the ocean of ajñāna, Forgetting his true self, he identifies himself with the diversity of the objects of the world. Later, upon the dawn of samayakjñāna, he realises his true nature and that everything is Brahman. Māyā leaves him and he is no more bound by it the result being the experience of the impartite sense of the mahāvākya.

If the truth is 'Brahman is all', why speak in terms or Brahman and jīva as if the two are different? *ekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti.* The knowers of śruti speak of the one single Reality as if it were diverse for the purpose of instructing the pupil. Thus the distinction of jīva and Brahman is a construct of māyā. Māyā envelopes the jīva until tattvajñāna arises, when the envelo-

ping ajñāna is removed, the ātmatattva shines of itself.

IV. vii. 33. 3. rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babhūva tadasya rūpam paricakṣaṇāya indro māyabihih pururūpamīyate yuktā hyasya harayah śata daśa.

By this mantra it is declared that Indra, i.e. the Paramātma who is all pervasive and of the nature of sat, cit and ānanda appears delimited in a multiplicity of bodies and takes myriad forms from ākāśa down to the smallest particle of dust. He is reflected in everybody. The reflection is for the sake of the realisation of His original form. Thus the mantra refers to both to avecceda or limitation theory and the pratibimba or reflection theory respecting the jīva.

The same idea is mentioned in the Bṛhadaraṅyaka Upaniṣad II. v. where it is said *tadetadṛṣih paśyannavocat rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babhūva.*

II. ii. 4. of Aitareyāraṇyaka treats about the relation of the worshipper and the worshipped. It is expressed in the words: *tadyoham sosau yosau soham.* This means: that which is I in the all-pervasive form of the prāṇadevata indwelling the

worshipper, this is that puruṣa who is in the orb of the sun. Similarly he who is in the orb of the sun, He is I. Thus mutual identity is established between the worshipper and the worshipped, pointing to non-difference between the two.

Turning to the Śukla Yajurveda, in the Bṛhadaraṇyakopaniṣad which forms part of the Śatapata Brāhmaṇa, we have the following of clear Advaitic import.

> *brahma vā idamagra āsīt, tadātmanamevāvetaham brahmasmīti tasmattatsarāambhavat tadyo yo devānām pratyabhudyata sa eva tadabhavat.*

Here the Brahmanhood of jīva and the fact that mokṣa is synonymous with sarvātmabhāva are clearly stated.

2. *dvitīyādvai bhayam bhavati* shows that the ills of samsāra are due to the wrong perception of duality, of the apparent existence of something other than Brahman.

A possible objection to the Advaita import here may arise from "*sa vai naiva reme tasmādekīkī na rameta*". It would appear from this that it is clear that it requires two to enjoy

pleasure. But this is only for the avidvān who feels incomplete by himself and seeks another.

This self of a person is unlimited, and expansive. Therefore the birth of the person cannot be said to be coming from somewhere and entering into the womb, nor does it mean that at the death the person goes out. The jīva is all-pervasive and so cannot be said to 'come' or 'go'. This is taught by a mantra which contains a story. Once there was a king called Sanāti. He had four priests, Bandhu, Subandhu, Śrutabandhu and Viprabandhu. He wanted them to practise the black magic against his enemies. They refused to do so. Upon that, he dismissed them from his service and appointed two others in their stead. Bandhu and others got angry and practised the black art against the king. The new priests took up the challenge and aimed their knowledge at Subandhu and brought about his death. Then Subandhu's brothers uttered the followfng mantra to restore him to life.

VIII. i. 20. yatte yamam vaivasvatam mano jagāma dūrakam. tatta āvartayamasīha kṣyāya jībase.

By this mantra it is conveyed that it is only the *linga śarīra* of a person that comes in at birth and

goes out at death and not his ātman as it is all-pervasive (vibhu).

Here is another famous mantra 4. 7. 33-3.

rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babhūva
tadasya rūpam paricakṣaṇāya
indro māyābhih pururūpa īyate
yuktā hyasya harayah śatā daśa

The meaning of this mantra is: Indra or the Paramātma is omnipresent, of the nature of sat, cit and ānanda. But by the upādhis of antahkaraṇa etc he enters into different bodies differentiated in so many ways. He then appears as so many jīvas in the several bodies. By the beginningless power of māyā, he assumes and appears in different forms of the universe beginning with ākāśā.

The first part of this mantra may be distinguished into two. rūpam rūpam pratirūpobhabhūva means that the Paramātma is reflected in every self. This conveys that the Supreme who is in all beings is also in the body of the worshipper. "He is the puruṣa in the orb of the sun. I am this puruṣa. He is resident in the body of myself, the worshipper. Thus That which is I is He; and That which is He is I." The mantra teaches the identity between the worshipper and the worshipped.

The passages :

yatra hi dvaitamiva bhavati, taditara itaram paśyati, and, *yatra tvasya sarvamātmaivābhūt tat kena kam paśyet*

occurring in this upaniṣad show the distinction between the vyāvahārika and the pāramārthika points of view. The mahāvākya *ayamātmā brahma* also occurs here. In the third adhyāya, in the context of the *Artabhāga praśna*, there is a clear indication of the fact that the jñānis attain mukti here and now, and that mukti does not mean going to another world.

The mantra *nanyadatostidraṣṭṛ, srotṛ-mantṛ* clearly indicates that the jīva is not something other than Brahman. In the fourth adhyāya we have in the *jyotirbrāhmaṇa*, the question raised *katama ātmā*. The nature of the jīva is examined through the three states of consciousness and in the conlcusion we have *sa va eṣa mahānaja ātmā.... sarvasyeśānah sarvasyādhipatih eṣa sarveśvara eṣa bhūtadhipatih* thereby establishing that the jīva is essentially of the nature of Brahman.

The mantra : *yadbhūtam yaccha bhavyam puruṣa evedam sarvam* proclaims that all is Brahman and that nothing āpart from Brahman has any exis-

tence or meaning. And towards the end; *tameva viditvātimrtyumeti nānyah panthā vidyate'yanāya* unmistakably says that mukti is gained by jñāna alone.

32-11. parītya bhūtāni parītya lokān
parītya sarvāh pradiśo diśaśca
upasthāyā prathamajāmrtasyātma-
nātmanambhisamviveśa

This says that the attainment of mokṣa is through the realisation that the self is the ādhiṣṭāna (substratum) of the entire universe, which is Brahman.

The same is conveyed in 40-6.

yastu sarvāṇi bhūtanyātmanyevānupaśyati
sarvabhūteṣu catmānam tato na vijugupsate

He who sees all living and lifeless things in his self, and his self in all these has no cause for aversion or grief or sin.

40-7 declares

yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtanyātmaivābhūt vijānatah
tatra ko mohah kasśokah ekatvamanupaśyatah

The import of this is that to him who sees non-duality everywhere there is no delusion or grief. The *eva* (only) in *atmaivābhūt* implies that there is

nothing else apart from the ātman. To him who has realised Brahman free from all duality, samsāra with its constituents of śoka and moha does not exist.

Passing on to the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* of the Kriṣṇayajurveda, the words *satyam jñānam anantam brahma* occurring in it convey the constituent qualities (svarūpa lakṣanas) of Brahman. In respect of the vidvān the knower of Brahman, it is said *sośnute sarvān kāmān saha,* he enjoys all kinds of bliss at the same time, and so has no unfulfilled desires.

yadāhyevaiṣa etasmin udaram antaram kurute atha tasya bhayam bhavati

points to the unavoidability of samsārabhaya to him who has duality consciousness and '*yadahyevaiṣa etasmin....abhayam pratiṣṭām vindate* indicates that freedom from involvement in samsāra arises from the perception of non-duality.

sa yascāyam puruṣe yascāsāvāditye sa ekah points to the identity between jīva and the Paramātman indwelling in Āditya. Similarly the mantra *ahamannam aha mannādah* indicates the sarvātmatva, universality of the ātman.

The fourth khanda of Taittirīya samhitā has it as follows:

ya imā viśvā bhuvanāni juhvadṛṣirhotā niṣasādapi ta-naha sa āśiṣa dravinamiccamānah paramaccado vara āviveśa.

This means that Visvakarma, the Creator destroyed these worlds during praḷaya and remained by Himself i.e. before creation He was one only. Then He desired: May I produce Many. He concealed His transcendental form and entered into the heart in the form of jīva. Thus the identity of Īśvara and jīva and the concealment of His form by māyā are stated in this mantra.

yo nah pitā janiiā yo vidhātā yo nah sato abhyāsajjajāna yo devānām namadhā eka eva tam sampraśnam bhuvanay antyanyā is an echo of *īndram varuṇam agnimāhuh atho divyah sasuparṇo garutmān ekam sadvi prā bahudhā vadanti*

emphasises that the one ultimate Reality appears and is spoken of variously.

The next mantra is:

na tamvidātha ya imam jajānanyadyuṣmākamantaram bhavati. nīhāreṇa pravartājalpyā casutṛpa ukthaśāscaranti.

It means: You jīvas do not know the Viśvakarma who produced all this. You know yourselves as distinct and separate individuals with particular names and forms. But this is not your pāramārtthika nature. That is hidden from your vision as the sun is hidden by the clouds. So, in your assumed individuality, you are lost in your prāṇas and are satisfied in your sensual happiness. You make no attempt to know your real nature. Thus it is conveyed by this mantra that the seeming difference between Brahman and jīva is brought about by the intervention of māyā, but that in reality they are one.

viśvatascakṣuruta viśvatomukho viśvatohasta utavisvatasspāt. sambāhubhyām namati sampatairairdyāvā prthvī janayavn deva ekah.

This conveys how Parameśvara shines after creating the several jīvas with different senses hands and feet i.e. with various limbs. He has eyes everywhere, hands everywhere etc. That is because Parameśvara is all jīvas in one. Sarvātmakatva of Parameśvara is indicated by this.

Tait. Aran 1. 11. : *atrṣyamstrṣyadhyāyat asmajjātā memithū caran putro nirutyā vaidehah acetā yascetanah satammaṇimavindat so'nangulirāvayat.*

This means that this ātman who is desireless acquires desire due to its false identification with what is non intelligent or jaḍa. Similarly it is free from thought, yet it thinks. Due to this false identification it is subject to delusion. Thus the qualitilessness of jīva and his being endowed with qualities due to adhyāsa are indicated here.

nāmanamaivanāmame. napumsakam pumām strayasmi. sthāvaromyathajangamah. yajekṣiyastāhe ca. (Ar. 1. 11).

By this mantra it is brought out that everything is Brahman. The Brahmavit proclaims his experience. He says: In my previous state when I was subject to ajñāna I had a number of births as deva, as a human being, as a cow or as a horse and I was known by different names appropriate to those janmas. All these names were only identifying sounds of different external forms. Whatever is neuter, or masculine or feminine in the world, I am all that. Even the immobile and the mobile, I am all that. I am that Brahman which is of the nature of sat, cit and ānanda and is the inner reality of everything.

ekassan bahudhā vicārah. This mantra makes it clear that the Paramātman who is the inmost

essence of everything is one only ; yet, as jīva, He appears as many.

The ultimate and absolute unity of Brahman and the relative character of the multiplicity ridden world are conveyed in the Sāmaveda text:

prajāpatirvā idameka āsīt. so'kāmayata bahusyām prajāyeyeti sa etamatirātramapaśyat

and

prajapatirvā idameka āsīnnāharasīnna rātrirāsīt (Tāndyamahābrāhmaṇa IV. I).

Similarly

brahma ha vā idam agra āsīt tasya tejoraso'tyaricyata refers by *idam* to the prapañca of name and form and says that this prapañca so diversified after creation was Brahman only before creation. To the same purport is the mantra

sadeva somyedam agra āsīt
and *ātma vā idameka evāgra āsīt.*

In the mantra brāhmaṇa of the earlier part of *Chāndogyopaniṣad,* we have the following mantra :

pratikṣatre pratitiṣṭāmi rāṣtre ; pratyaśveṣu pratitiṣṭāmi goṣu ; pratiprāṇe pratitiṣṭāmi puṣtau ; pratyangeṣu pratitiṣṭāmyātmani etc.

pratitiṣṭamyātmani means: "I who am the jīvātman am established in my own real nature in (as) the Pāramātman."

In the Sandilya Vidyā of the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, we have *sarvam khalvidam brahma tajjalāniti s'ānta upās'ita.* By the principle of *sāmānādhikararaṇya*, which conveys identity of reference of two terms in a sentence, the non-difference of all things of the world from Brahman is brought out by the words *sarvam khalvidam brahma.* The word *idam* refers to the objects capable of being spoken of as *this.* Affirmed at the same time alongside of Brahman, the identity of the world and Brahman is expressed.

If it is asked how can the variegated prapañca be non-different from the unitary Brahman, the answer is contained in the words *tajjalān*, which means that the world arises from Brahman, disappears into it, and, in between, is sustained by it. A thing is non-different from that from which it arises, into which it disappears and by which it exists. For example the pot came from clay, disappears into clay and remains as pot in clay and so is non-different from clay.

Explaining how by the knowledge of one everything becomes known (*ekavijñānena sarvavij-*

ñānam) the sage Uddālaka tells his son Svetaketu: *yathā somyāikena mṛtpiṇdena sarvam mṛnmayam vijñātam syāt vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam.* This means: If the material cause of a thing is known, all things fashioned out of it are also automatically known in their real nature as the seeming individualityof those things is only in name while their real nature is that material. The pots and the pans may appear different from clay; but that is a matter of words; really clay alone is real and pot etc. are unreal. The clay alone is the truth by which the pots and pans 'appear' as if they are real apart from their basic clay. The clay is the adhiṣṭāna and the nāmarūpa is the āropita. Between the adhiṣṭāna and the āropita, the former alone is the reality and the latter is the appearance. From this it follows that if the underlying reality clay (or Brahman) is known, the apparent nature of pots and pans (or of the world) is known. Thus is established that there is nothing real apart from the Supreme Cit or Brahman which is the cardinal tenet of Advaita.

In the same context we have the following in the sixth adhyāya:

sadeva somyedamagra āsidekamevadvitīyam.

This means before creation, all the visible things, animate and inanimate were non-different

from the cāitanya which is the Existent (sadrūpam). It was one only without a second: *ekam eva advitīyam.* 'Ekam' here means that Brahman is one, not two. There is not another like it. 'Ekam' denies *sajātīya bheda* of Brahman. 'Eva' (only) shows that Brahman alone is; there is nothiug else beside it. It denies *vijātīyabheda.* 'Advitīyam' (without a second) indicates that Brahman is unitary in the sense of there being no parts to distinguish in it, thereby denying *svagata bheda.* Thus Brahman is shown to be *bhedatraya rahitam,* devoid of all the three kind of differences. If the prapañca were real, it must have a like reality in its subtle condition. Then Brahman will have *vijātīya bheda.* And if the jīva is different from Brahman and if it were real as such then Brahman will be affected by *sajātīya bheda.* This is not warranted by śruti. Therefore, it has to be held that prapañca is mithyā and that the jīva is non-different from Brahman. Both of these are to be inferred from this statement: *sadeva somya idam-gra āsīt ekameva advitīyam.*

The famous Chandogya passage:

sa ya eṣo'ṇimaitadatmyamidam sarvam
tat satyam sa ātmā tattvamasi svetaketo

firmly establishes the ultimate sole reality of Brahman and the identity of the jīvātman and the

Paramātman. *aitadātmyamidam sarvam* means *idam sarvam eṣa ātma* i.e. all this is this ātmā. *aitadātmyamidam idam sarvam* superficially will mean: All this world is ātman (or Brahman). i.e. that the world is non-different from Brahman. But literally there cannot be non-difference between the prapañca which is jaḍa and Brahman which is the nature of caitanya. The equation between *sarvam* and *aitadatmyam* is to be understood on the principle of *bādhāyām sāmānādhikaraṇyam.*

This principle is explained as follows: A man mistakes a pillar for a thief and says "this is a thief". 'This' here refers to the pillār. But he does not know that it is a pillar. He has only awareness of it as 'this' and identifies 'this' with a thief. Thus he affirms an identity of reference between 'this' (which refers to a pillar, but which he does not know) and the thief. Thus he understands 'this' and 'thief' on the principle of *sāmānādhikaraṇya.* But this *sāmānādhikaraṇa* is made under the delusion or ajñāna that 'this' is a thief. This is due to adhyāsa or super-imposition of *coratva* on 'this'. This is therefore called *adhyāse sāmānadhikaraṇya.*

On close inspection 'this' is found to be not a thief but a pillar and so a *samānādhikaraṇa*

is now affirmed between 'this' and pillar. The *coratva* of the 'this' is annulled; it becomes *bādhita* and the *samānādhikaraṇa* that ensues between 'this' and pillar is known as *bādhāyam sāmānādhikaraṇyam.*

Even so, *idam sarvam*, all this prapañca which was originally identified with other than the ātman due to adhyāsa, is now identified with the ātman which is the enduring truth; *tat satyam* and Svetaketu is told that he is that ātman. Thus on the basis of the text *tajjalān*, the entire prapañca is shown to be non differnt from Brahman. *aitadātmyam sarvam tat satyam sa ātma* identifies the prapañca in its ultimate essence free from adhyāsa with Brahman. As the caitanya in Svetaketu is non-different from that in Brahman, on the principle of *abhede sāmānadhikaraṇyam* (identify of reference due to non-difference) Svetaketu is instructed by the māhāvakya *tattvamasi.*

The Chāndogya text *yatraitat puruṣah svapiti nāmasatā somya tadā sampanno bhavati tasmādevam svapitityācakṣte svamhyapīto bhavati* also intimates the non-difference between the jīvātman and the Paramātman. The word *hi* in *svamhyapīto bhavati* conveys what is within everybody's knowledge namely that in the suṣupti state one, with-

drawn from everything external, abides in one's inmost nature or svarūpa. There is no sense of difference in that state; for were it there, it would appear. That means that abheda is one's natural state while bheda is the result of conditioning.

In the context of the *daharavidyā* in the eighth chapter we have: "*tadyathāpi hiraṇyanidhim nihitamakṣetrajñā uparyupari sancaranto no vindeyur evamevemāsarvāh prajāh aharargachantyah etam brahmalokam na vindanti anṛtena hi pratyūḍah.*" This means that even as a man walking over a buried treasure a number of times is not aware of the treasure under his feet, so is a man unaware of his essential nature of freedom from upādhis which is the essence of Brahman. He is then enveloped by avidyā which makes him unaware of his Brahmanhood. If ajñāna comes in the way of Brahmaprāpti, *per contra* it is implied that jñāna is the means to it by removing the ajñāna which is the obstacle to it. And, whatever is removed by jñāna is mithyā as seen in the rope-snake example. When the adhyāsa (super-imposition) is negated, what remains is the adhiṣṭāna (the substratum). In the rope-snake delusion, when the snake-consciousness vanishes, the rope-consciousness arises.

MANĪṢĀ PANCAKA

Manīṣā Pancaka is a pentad of verses spoken by Śri Śankara on a historic occasion in his life. The occasion itself seems to have been a divine conspiracy between Lord Śankara, the Paramesvara and Śri Śankara the Bhagavatpāda believed to be an incarnation of the Lord.

It was a morning in the city of Banaras. Śri Śankara was returning after his holy bath in the Ganga. The streets of Banaras seem to have been then too as now all narrow. As Śri Śankara was walking along, he saw a caṇḍāḷa coming towards him from the opposite direction. Though he had scaled the heights of Advaitic wisdom and sounded the depths of Advaitic experience, the Ācārya behaved as a man of the world for the nonce and bade the caṇḍāla stop and turn back and not to 'pollute' him by his approach.

Upon this the caṇḍāḷa calmly queried Śri Śankara :

annamayād annamayam athavā caitanyameva caitanyāt yativara dūrīkartum vāncasi kimbrūhi gaccha gaccheti

Best of samnyasins. Which biddest thou go away and from what, the material body from another material body or the caitanya from caitanya? It cannot be the former; for as bodies, there is no difference between thine and mine. Thine is annamaya; so is mine. Both are made up of material substances. They are identical. There is no sense in bidding one piece of matter go away from another piece.

'Nor can it be the latter. The caitanya that thou art is the same caitanya that I am. It is one and undivided everywhere. The one cit is all-pervasive. What is omnipresent cannot go from one place to another.

'So, all material things, their shapes and forms as effects of māyā are in truth one. Equally all are the caitanyas pervading all that lives and moves. Where then does the possibility of superior or inferior arise in respect of homogeneous matter or of identical intelligence? The moon is reflected in all waves of the ocean, be they big or small. The sun shines in the waters of the Ganga as well as in the waters of the drain. But does this make a difference to the sun? It

is the same ātman that dwells everywhere. The reflections of the moon are the appearances; the moon is the reality.

'Know this, holy Sage, and tell me now, which do you wish to go away from what—the material body from another material body despite their being one in snbstance, or the cit encased in one uapādhi from the cit encased in another, though both are the one indivisible cit ?'

Upon this, it is said that the Ācārya broke forth into five ślokas celebrating the glory of ātmajñāna which transcends all empirical distinctions. These ślokas are a compendious expression of the highest reaches of Advaita Vedānta and are well worth clear understanding and earnest contemplation.

The following is the first śloka.

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिषु स्फुटतरा या सविदुज्जृम्भते
या ब्रह्मादिपिपीलिकान्ततनुषु प्रोता जगत्साक्षिणी ।
सैवाहं न च दृश्यवस्त्विति दृढप्रज्ञाऽपि यस्यास्ति चेत्
चाण्डालोऽस्तु स तु द्विजोऽस्तु गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम ॥ १ ॥

jāgradsvapna suṣuptiṣu sputatarā
yā samvid ujjrumbate
ya brahmādi pipilikanatatanuṣu
protājagatsākṣiṇī
saivāham na ca dṛśyavastviti
dṛḍaprajñā' pi yasyāsticet
cāndalostu sa tu dvijostu
gururityeṣu manīṣā mama.

In the three states of jāgrat, (waking), svapna (dream) and suṣupti (dreamless sleep) the Paramātma compacted of pure cit or intelligence shines accompanying them all. Our awareness of objects in the waking state is due to the connection of the objects with the cit through the psychoses of the mind. In the dream too there is a like awareness of objects of the dream world created by the mind out of the tendencies (vāsanas) wrought into it in the waking moments. During dreamless sleep also the cit is awake, but the mind which connects the objects with the cit is dissolved in avidyā and therefore there is no cognition of objects including ahankāra.

yad vai tanna paśyati paśyan vai tan napaśyati na hi dṛṣte vaiparilopo vidyate (Brih Up.).

Thus one identical intelligence underlies the waking, the dream and the dreamless sleep

conditions of consciousness. It is this sākṣicaitanya or witnessing consciousness which is equated in the ultimate analysis with the Supreme Brahman.

Were it not for this sākṣicaitanya, the entire world of things and events whether in waking or dream will cease to be the objects of perception. For, those things, being non-intelligent (jaḍa), cannot perceive by themselves.

Says the śruti: *tat sṛṣṭvā tadevānuprāviśat ; anena jīvenātmanānupraviśya nāmarūpevyākāravāṇi*: 'having created it, entered into it; Entering in by this jīvātman, I shall bring about distinctions of name and form.' Thus from the highest kāraṇa Brahman to the smallest worm, this consciousness indwells as the witness of the world.

He who is firmly convinced that he is that Brahman, such sākṣicaitanya functioning in all the states of consciousness and indwelling in all that lives in the universe, be he a candāla or a twice-born, says Śri Śankara, to my mind, he is a guru qualified to teach the highest wisdom.

The first line of the śloka refers to the pratyāgātman which is the core of the individual, the self-effulgent intelligence functioning in all the

states of consciousness. The second line relates to the Paramātman which indwells all things living and lifeless in the universe. The third line affirms the identity of the jīvātman with the Paramātman and the actual relisation of the mahāvākya *ahambrahmāsmi*. The last line speaks of such a person for whom this identity is a conscious experience as a Brahmajñānī who, whatever his varṇa in the vyāvahārika world is fit to instruct others in this supreme wisdom.

II

ब्रह्मैवाहमिदं जगच्च सकलं चिन्मात्रविस्तारितं
सर्वं चैतदविद्यया त्रिगुणयाऽशेषं मया कल्पितम् ।
इत्थं यस्य दृढामतिः सुखतरे नित्ये परे निर्मले
चाण्डालोऽस्तु स तु द्विजोऽस्तु गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम ॥

brahmaivāhamidam jaggacca sakalam
cinmātra vistāritam
sarvamcaitadavidyayā triguṇayā
seṣam mayā kalpitam
ittham yasya drḍhā matissubhatare
nitye pare nirmale
cāndalostu sa tu dvijostu gururityeṣa
manīṣa mama.

I am Brahman. I am not 'different' from Brahman, nor am I only a part of Brahman. I am non-different from Brahman. I am essentially pure, intelligent and free: *suddha buddha mukta svabhāvah.* I am the infinite Supreme Being. The ātman resident in bodies is only the abridgement in upādhic moulds of the Paramātman that is Brahman. All this world is only the expansion of the cit through the medium of māyā. All the objects are appearance of the cit. It is the rope that appears as the snake. The snake is the appearance, the rope is its substratum or adhiṣṭana. Even so, Brahman is the adhiṣṭāna of the myriad appearances of physical objects that constitute the universe. Not merely these objects, but even Īśvara who is said to be their creator is my creation with the aid of māyā of three fold attributes. Even as a snake is a projection of my mind on the foundation of a rope, so too is the world a like projection caused by the agency of māyā. Realising this one should wean oneself from attachment of any kind to the world of appearance extended in name and form, and must establish oneself in this firm conviction on the eternal and blemishless Supreme. Such a one, says Śri Śankara be he a caṇḍāla or a twice born is fit to be my guru. That is my belief.

It is to be noted here that even Īśvara is considered to be a part of the phenomenal world for the reason that He is associated with māyā and the activities of creation etc. He functions in accord with the qualities of satva, rajas, and tamas which are the components of māyā; that is, He is the māyic edition of the Supreme Brahman which, in its super excellance, is pure and beyond the sway of the three guṇas. But this however does not militate against the majesty and divinity of Īśwara who though associated with māyā, yet, unlike man, has mastery over it.

III

शश्वन्नश्वरमेव विश्वमखिलं निश्चित्य वाचा गुरो
नित्यं ब्रह्म निरन्तरं विमृशतां निर्व्याजशान्तात्मना ।
भूतं भावि च दुष्कृतं प्रदहतां संविन्मये पावके
प्रारब्धाय समर्पितं स्ववपुरित्येषा मनीषा मम ॥ ३ ॥

śaśvannaśvarameva viśvamakhilam nischitya vācā
gururornityam brahmanirantaram
vimrṣatā nirvyājasāntātmanā
bhūtam bhāvi ca duṣkrtam pradahatā
samvinmaye pāvake
prarabdhāya samarpitam svavapurityeṣā
manīṣā mama

The guru declares from his realisation that this entire universe is impermanent and liable to destruction. The pupil, so instructed by the teacher is convinced of it and engages in enquiry on Brahman for a long time without interval. By detaching himself from all things earthly, by withdrawing from all intimations of senses, he secures what is called *manonās'a*, the extinction of mind and he is in a state of equilibrium and peace. Attaining such a state, he realises the transiency of all objects of the universe.

Of such a one, all the actions that he might have done in the past or might do in the future are burnt in the fire of jñāna and his body is *abandoned only* to the force of the prārabdha karmas that, having begun to bear fruit, cannot be recalled or annulled. Such a one says Śri Śankara is my guru. That is my firm belief.

It is to be noted that it is said here that all karma is burnt in the fire of jñana meaning that the two, karma and jñana, are mutually opposed to each other. Jñāna cannot issue out of karma. The reason for this as follows. The cause of the appearance of the world is ajñāna which veils the identity of the pratyagātman (the individual self)

and the Paramātman (the Supreme Self). Karma is the product of ajñāna. By reason of the operation of beginningless ajñāna and its products, the upādhis, the sense of agent and enjoyer (kartṛtva and bhoktṛtva) contaminates the sense of jñāna of the ātman as one without a second. Thus the pure jñāna and the upādhi-ridden ājñāna whtch is the source of action and enjoyment cannot keep house together.

Moreover, the fruits of karma like earthly benefits here and heavenly benefits hereafter only yield a minimal felicity of determinate duration. Jñāna on the other hand gives plenary felicity of absolute bliss. Hence jñāna which is the source of a joy of greater quantity and of superior quality cannot be a subsidiary part or an effect of karma.

Further, it is only he who is after the pleasures of earth or heaven that is qualified to perform karma. But the adhikāri for jñāna is one whose mind is detached from all pleasures, material or ethereal. Again, karma is of the nature of darkness being the product of ajñāna while jñāna is self-effulgent svaprakāśa. Hence, as darkness and light, they are incompatible with each other. The one cannot be the part of the other nor can

there be a conjunction between the two. It is only he who has renounced all karmas, namely the samnyāsi that is qualified for ātmajñāna. Such samnyāsa is of two kinds. One is the samnyāsa adopted to be free from all karma in order to *seek* Brahmajñāna. This is known as *vividiṣā samnyāsa* (from *viditum icchā vividiṣā*); the second is the samnyāsa of one who is an atmajñāni. It is called *vidvatsamnyāsa*. Such a one is spoken of as a Paramahamśa. Understanding from books and the teacher the true nature of the ātman, casting away the attractions of wife, wealth and progeny, one immediately renounces everything and goes out freed of all attachment. The moment one has understood the Truth, immediately discarding the sacred thread and the tuft, taking up the daṇdā, one becomes a mendicant.

Yadā tu viditam tattvam param
brahma sanātanam
tadaiva daṇdam samgrhya sopavītam
śikhām tyajet

The foregoing is the means to tattvajñāna What accrues from it? What is its pala? All actions of the past and the future are burnt in the fire of jñāna. The past actions include all those which have not yet begun to bear fruit and which

were accumulated in previous lives, and also all those gathered in this life before the dawn of jñāna. The future actions refer to those done mechanically by the body for its sustenance after enlightenment.

To the objection : *nābhuktam kṣīyate karma kalpakoti śatairapi*, that effects of karma cannot be annulled even after hundreds of kalpas, the answer is that the past karmas are consumed by the fire of jñāna and with regard to future karmas the brahmajñāni has no consciousness of being the agent or the beneficiary of karma. *ñākārṣam, nakaromi nakariṣyāmi*: I did not do; I do not do; I shall not do, Thus in all periods of time he divests himself of agency for action. For, he knows that he is the ātman which neither does nor enjoys (*akartā* and *abhoktā*) and not the body which is the instrument of action of the manas which is an upādhi. Even a fool will not associate responsibility with one who does not act. Action and its effects do not stick to the Brahmajñānī even as water does not stick to a lotus leaf. So the dictum 'nābhuktam' etc., applies only to one who has not acquired Brahmajñāna.

The Brahmajñānī may not be tainted by sin or *pāpa*. But what about *puṇya*, the result of

meritorious action? *Puṇya karma* is prescribed by śāstra, and śāstra and Brahmajñāna are not incompatible. Therefore, has not a Brahmajñānī to enjoy the fruits of his meritorious deeds and has he not to be bound by them?

No; for, like pāpa, punya too is the source of janma, another life, in which to enjoy the effects of puṇya. The purpose of jñāna is to annual a future life. So, the jñāni is not under the sway of *puṇya karma* even as he is not affected by *pāpa karma.*

A further question may be raised: Why should not *ārabdhakarma* (karma that has begun to bear fruit) also be automatically liquidated like *anārabdhakarma* (karma that has not had its effects) when one becomes a jñāni? One has to undergo the effects of ārabdhakarma so long as one lives in the body (*prārabdhāya samarpitam svavapuh*). Here prārabhdha refers both to pāpakarma and to puṇyakarma. This is borne out both by scripture, experience and reason (śruti, anubhava and yukti). Says the śruti: *tasya tāvadeva ciram yāvanna vimokṣye attha sampatsye.* The enlightened one lives in the body only so long as he is not released from it by the exhaustion of the prārabdha karma. The moment it is liquidated by undergoing its effects

in full, then immediately, separate from the body, he attains oneness with Brahman.

Jīvanmuktas carry the body and function through it till it falls off. Sadāśiva Brahmendra and Ramaṇa Maharṣi exemplify this. Yukti too supports it. An archer can control his arrow only till he has discharged it from his bow. But the moment he discharged it, his mastery over it ceases and it falls down of itself when its momentum subsides. Similarly, the brahmajñāni is master of karma that has not begun to bear fruit, not over what has begun to effectuate itself. Therefore, there is no annulment, even by jñāna, of ārabdha karma, be it good or evil.

A jñāni who thus resigns his body to the operation of prarābdha is, says Śri Śankara, my guru be he a caṇḍāla or a twice born. That is my belief.

This śloka brings out that the entire jagat is the product of māyā and therefore that it will not abide for ever as it appears extended in name and form. This the mumukṣu learns from scripture and the words of the guru. Then, withdrawing his mind from all external diversions, *nirvyāja sāntāmanā* : (ātma here refers to the mind), he

realises this truth that ultimately the multiplicity of the world is founded on the unitary substratum of Brahman of which the entire jagat is the vivarta. The moment this enlightenment arises, becoming established in Brahman, he is liberated for the rest of his life, (i.e., so long as he has unrequited prārabdha karma) and goes about as a jīvanmukta. The fact of the jagat as a product of māyā and of jīvanmukti as a matter of experience of those who are Brahmanjñānis are both brought out in this śloka.

IV

या तिर्यङ्नरदेवताभिरहमित्यन्तः स्फुटा गृह्यते
यद्भासा हृदयाक्षदेहविषया भान्ति स्वतोऽचेतनाः ।
तां भास्यैः पिहितार्कमण्डलनिभां स्फूर्तिं सदा भावयन्
योगी निर्वृतमानसः स गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम ॥ ४ ॥

yā tiryangnaradevatābhi-
rahamityantaṣputā grhyate
yadbhāsa hrdayākṣadehaviṣayā
bhānti svato' cetanah
tam bāsyaih pihiitārkamandala
nibham ṣpurtim sadā bhāvāyan
yogī nirvṛtamānasah
guruirityeṣā manīsāmama.

All creatures, subhuman, human and superhuman refer to themselves as 'I'. This 'I' consciousness is common to all of them. This consciousness is self-orginated; it is not dependent on anything else. It is self-effulgencte *svayamprakāśa*. This effulgence is in essence the same in all. Being consciousness, it is of the nature of cit or pure intelligence at bottom. It is, as it were, the reflection of the Supreme cit, the Paramātman, on the media of the physical upādhis which include everything from the antahkaraṇa to the sense organs. The physical organs may differ; but the underlying cit is identical in all beings who are aware of it when they refer to themselves, each, as 'I'.

The other organs are inert, *jaḍa*. They shine only by reason of the inner effulgence of the cit back of them all. Even the sun, the moon, the stars, even lightning not to speak of fire, none of these is self-luminous. They derive their luminosity only from the ātman. And so, the sense organs which are microcosmic editions of the macroscosmic elements have no native light of their own, *tasyabhāśa sarvamidam vibhāti*. By its light, all this shines.

It may be asked: If every person is thus aware of himself as 'I', i.e. possesses this consciousness of itself, why are not all of them automatically liberated since liberation means realisation of one's self? True, everyone is aware of *himself*; but everyone is not aware of *his self*. The former is the self bound by the limitations of the upādhis; the latter is the self that has been divested of them. No ordinary person sees his self apart from the limitations of the body etc. Like the sun concealed by the clouds, a person sees his self 'darkly' through the limitations that envolop it.

The yogī pierces the veil which shrouds the ātman and realises it in its lone splendour. To such a one all the knots of the heart are cut asunder, all his doubts vanish, all his karmas are scotched by the fire of enlightenment. The ajñāna which caused the involvements of life with their attendant ills vanishes. Becoming an atmajñāni, and ever contemplating that effulgence in the core of his being, he is at peace and enjoys a bliss which is not of the earth. He is a *nirvrtamānasa*. Such a person who has attained this realisation says Śri Śankara, is my guru. That is my belief.

V

यत्सौख्यांबुधिलेशलेशत इमे शक्रादयो निर्वृता
यच्चित्ते नितरां प्रशान्तकलने लब्ध्वा मुनिर्निर्वृतः ।
यस्मिन्नित्यसुखाम्बुधौ गलितधीर्ब्रह्मैव न ब्रह्मवित्
यः कश्चित्स सुरेन्द्रवन्दितपदो नूनं मनीषा मम ॥ ५ ॥

yat saukhyambudhilesalesata
ime s'akrādayao nirvrtāh
yac itte nitarām praśāntakalane
labdhvā munir nirvrtah
yasminnityasukambudhau
galitadhīrbrahmaiva na brahmavit
yah kascit sa surendravandita-
pado nūnam manīṣa mama.

The pratyagātman which is identical in essence with the Paramātman or the Supreme Brahman is unalloyed bliss. It is compacted of ānanda in the sense that one who is in immediate and continuous communion with it is so absorbed in it and so completely enveloped by it that, unaware of anything beside it, he has no second thing to fear or grieve over. Where there is no fear or grief, it is all joy, ānanda, pure and simple. The ātman which is self-luminous cit whole and entire is an ocean of bliss.

The happiness of the celestials, not to speak of earthly mortals, is but an infinitisimal fraction of this bliss. The munī who is in tune with the Supreme Brahman enjoys that bliss in a superabundant measure with a mind in which all worldly agitations are stilled. Immersed in that ocean of bliss, he is not merely a knower of Brahman, but Brahman itself. One who has realised this superlative bliss of Brahmānubhava receives obeisance even from the lord of devas himself. For all that is auspicious and beneficent flows from one who has achieved the unity with the supreme Self (*tasmādātmajñam hi arcayet bhūtikāmah*). Such a person who is not merely a Brahmavit, but Brahman itself is, says Śri Śankara, a guru to me. That is my firm belief.

While the fourth śloka emphasises the nature of the Supreme Ātman as *svayamprakāśa cit*, self-effulgent intelligence, this the last one brings out its ānanda aspect and emphasises its plenary character. It conveys that earthly and heavenly joys are as nothing when compared to it, and that one who is immersed in it obtains an experience of totality which invests him with the character of Brahman itself, thus confirming the dictum *brahmavid brahmaivabhavati.*

The story in Śri Śankaravijaya is that upon Śri Śankara uttering these verses, Lord Parameśvara who appeared in the guise of the cāndāḷa revealed Himself to Śri Śankara's gaze as the Lord of Kailās. This incident is referred to by some persons as indicating Śri Śankara's defeat at the hands of the cāṇḍāḷa. It is idle to argue that Śri Śankara who had by then written his commentaries in the triple scripture of Vedānta after self-realisation of the Advaitic truth would have been so oblivious of the lesson that he had learnt and taught to betray such a colossal ignorance of the fundamental Advaitic tenet. He used this only as an occasion to give point to his teaching and engrave it the more deeply in the minds of his sisyas. To do this he had to resort to a make-believe of a vyāvahāric drama.

As regards the opinion that the *manīṣā-pancaka* erases all distinctions of high and low, attention is to be drawn to the first three lines of each śloka which mention the qualities of an enlightened person. The refrain *cāṇḍāḷostu dvijostu gururityeṣā manīṣā mama* refers not to *any kind* of cāṇḍāḷa, but only to such as have attained the wisdom described in the ślokas. Such persons belong to the

pāramārthika stage where vyāvahārika distinctions do not apply. It is that which Śri Śankara had in mind when he uttered these ślokas. He saw the cāṇḍāḷa as an ātmajñāni, as a Brahmavit, and hence proclaimed him fit to be accepted as his guru. From the bodily point of view, men may be equal; but it cannot be gainsaid that there are intellectual and spiritual differences.

The case is analogous to what Śri Kriṣṇa declared when He said :

vidyā vinaya sampanne brāhmane gavi hastini
svani caiva śvapāke ca paṇditāh samadarśinah

Those who see the learned and disciplined brāhmaṇa, the cow, the elephant, the dog and the eater of the dog with an equal eye are paṇditāh, i.e. ātmajñāh, those who have attained ātmajñāna. The samadarśana of others who proclaim equality from housetops will be purely superficial, melting away at the first touch of self-interest. The paṇdita's samadarśana is based on the *realised perception* of the same ātman in all of them and is more real and enduring. It is not given to everybody to attain to this perception.

ŚRI DAKṢIṆĀMŪRTI STOTRA

The main truths of Advaita Vedānta have been succinctly expounded by Śri Śankara Bhagavatpāda also in the Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra. It is a decad of invocatory verses in which supplication is made to the Eternal Guru, Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the Preceptor of the entire universe for all time. He is envisioned as an eternal youth sitting on the snow clad Himalayan heights, His gaze southward bent, his four aged disciples gathered in front of him in reverential humility, waiting for his initiating sign and the unspoken word which dispels their doubts and illumines the caves of ignorance in the mind. The refrain in the fourth line of every one of the verses is 'May this salutation be to that Dakṣiṇāmūrti, my Gurumūrti'.

I

विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं
पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया ।
यस्साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयं
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

vis'vam darpaṇadṛs'yamāna nagarī-
tulyam nijāntargatam

paśyannatmani māyayā
bhahirivodbhūtam yathā nidrayā
yassākṣatkurute prabhodha samaye
svātmānāmevādvayam
tasmai s'rīgurumūrtaye
nama idam śri dakṣiṇāmūrtaye.

In the first verse, Śri Śankara says: When a person dreams, he sees a number of worldly objects as if they are outside him. But strictly speaking, they are his residual mental tendencies appearing in the mind and therefore within the body. They appear to exist outside the body, but really they have emanated from the mind. When the dream is over, the person wakes up, and he realises the truth that the dream objects were not real. Similarly, a town reflected in a mirror is not over there 'in' the mirror by itself; its seeming substantiality is a projection of the town which is reflected. By these two examples, it is shown that there was no object as such in the dream or in the reflection 'behind' the mirror.

Similarly, this world of phenomena appears as existent outside of us. Really it is imbedded in the ātman. The power of māyā makes it appear as if the objects of the world exist in their own

right outside of us. That dream objects have no inherent substantiality is realised when one wakes from the dream. The unreality of the reflection in the mirror is a matter of common knowledge for any sensible adult. Even so, the truth of the non-substantiality of the world and the ultimate truth of the unitary ātman are realised when there is direct intuitive perception (*sākṣātkāra*) of the non-dual Brahman.

I bow to that Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti who instructs as aforesaid.

II

बीजस्यान्तरिवाङ्कुरो जगदिदं प्राङ्निर्विकल्पं पुन
र्मायाकल्पितदेशकालकलनावैचित्र्यचित्रीकृतम् ।
मायावीव विजृंभयत्यपि महायोगीव यः स्वेच्छया
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

bījasyantarivānkuro jagadidam
prāngnirvikalpam punah
māyākalpita deśakālakalanā
vaicitrīya citrīkṛtam
māyāvīva vijṛmbhayat-
yapi mahāyogīva yassvecchayā
tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye
nama idam śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye.

The first verse brought forth that the phenomena of the world are but an appearance of the ātman which is the sole reality. In the second verse, it is shown that the theories of causation adopted by other schools of philosophy are wrong, and that the diversity of the world is the result of the activity of māyā.

> The sprout comes out of the seed. As it comes, it does so with a form and with parts. But before it came out, it was concealed in the seed. Similarly, before 'creation' the world too was without name, form and qualities. But at the time of 'creation', it becomes variegated by the operation of time and space. He who by His own will and pleasure projects the world like a magician or like a yogin, to Him who is a guru and the Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti, I offer obeisance.

The idea is that the world is the variegated appearance of one primordial Substance under the play of māyā. To the enlightened one it has only as much reality as a magician's show. Great yogins like Viśvāmitra in the story who brought into existence new celestial orbs and another Indra, can project such worlds by their extraordinary

power. But even they have only a phenomenal existence (sattā) and are not pāramārthically real.

The phenomenal effect is inherent (*antargata*) in the cause. It is the sattā of the seed that is present in the leaf, flower and fruit. These effects are not in the ultimate analysis different from the seed. It is the undifferentiated seed that appears differentiated in them all. So too it is the undifferentiated Brahman that, from the vyāvahārika point of view, appears differentiated as the objects of the world. So, it is not a case of new origination as asatkāryavāda would have it, nor is it transformation or evolution as pariṇāmā vāda would view it.

III

यस्यैव स्फुरणं सदात्मकमसत्कल्पार्थकंभासते
साक्षात्तत्त्वमसीति वेदवचसा यो बोधयात्याश्रितान् ।
यत्साक्षात्करणाद्भवेन्न पुनरावृत्तिर्भवांभोनिधौ
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

yasyaiva spuraṇam sadātmakam
asatkalpārthakam bhāsate
sākṣāt tattvamasīti vedavacasā
yobhodhayatyāśritān
yatsākṣatkāraṇāt bhavenna
punarāvṛttirbhavombonidhau

tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye
nama idam śri dakṣiṇāmūrtaye.

The third verse refers to delusion of the world-appearance, the involvement in the vortex of samsāra on account of it, and the means to liberation.

A supplicatory śloka on the guru has it as follows: *gurubrahmā gururviṣnurgurudevo-maheśvarah gurussākṣāt parambrahma tasmai śrīgurave namah.*

The guru is equated with God Himself and one is bidden to have the same devotion to one's guru as one has for God: For,

yasya deve parābhaktih yatthā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitāhyartthāh prakāśante mahātmanah.

So, the guru is entitled to the same adoration as one gives to the Trinity, Brahma, Viṣnu and Maheśvara. Nay more, not only is the guru tho saguṇa manifestation of the Supreme; he is alse the Supreme Reality in Its nirguṇa aspect: *guru sakṣāt param brahma.*

The *parambrahma* is the goal of human spiritual endeavour, the goal being realisation of non-

duality with It. This realisation is the finale of the triple means of hearing, meditation and conviction; *sravaṇa, manana nididhyāsana.* These in their turn must be preceded by faith in scripture and devotion to the guru. For, scripture alone can intimate supersensible realities not falling within the province of ordinary vyāvahārika experience. These declarations of scripture have to be received from a guru who is himself a Brahmajñāni, Brahmavit, and so Brahman Itself according to the dictnm *Brahmavidbrahmaivabhavati.* Such a state of being Brahman is the *ne plus ultra* of spiritual progress.

But, out of compassion for others, this *brahmavit* who is *brahma eva* in his pāramārtthic realisation, descends to the vyāvahārika level to instruct others in the ultimate Truth. Even so, the Supreme Brahman which is nirguṇa etc. becomes saguṇa as Śri Dakṣināmūrti and proceeds to instruct for rescuing erring mortals from the tormenting fires of life in this vale of tears.[1] This śloka speaks about this process.

The phenomenal world is not *sat* like Brahman nor *asat* like a barren women's son. As we saw, it

1. *ajñāntargahana patitān ātmavidyopadeśaih*
trātum lokān bhavadavaśikhātāpāpapacyrmānān.

is different from both, *sadasadvilakṣaṇam*. It appears though it is not *real*. Its appearance is due to an existential import that it has. That is, it has a *sattā*. Wherefrom did it derive this *sattā* which a barren woman's son does not possess? The śloka says that it is the effulgent *sattā*, *spuraṇa* of the Supreme that makes what will be otherwise *asat* appear as the phenomenal world.

The spiritual aspirant (mumukṣu) has to realise two things; one that the external world derives its *sattā* from Brahman on which it appears, and two, that he, as the ātman, is non different from Brahman. These two can be effected (a) by the upadeśa of the guru and (b) by the anubhava of the siṣya. The verse goes on to say that the Supreme Reality as Dakṣiṇāmūrti teaches the Vedic (upaniṣadic) mahāvākya *Tattvamasi* to the earnest pupils who seek Him, establishing the non-difference between the jīvātman and the Paramātman. This upadeśa being listened to and meditated on brings about in due time Brahman-realisation. When this sākṣātkāra comes about, there is no further involvement in the ocean of samsāra. That is, one gets liberated from mortality. One becomes immortal. To that guru who gives this

upadeśa and by the realisation of which this samsāra vanishes, I bow in salutation.

The upaniṣads have many mahāvākyas which signify the central teaching of each upaniṣad. Of these, the most important are:

1. *prajñānam brahma* (Brahman is of the nature of intelligence).
2. *ayamātmābrahma* (this ātman is Brahman).
3. *tattvamasi* (That art thou).
4. *ahambrahmāsmi* (I am Brahman).
5. *Om Tat Sat.*

Of these *prājñānambrahma*, and *ayamātmā brahma* are descriptive mahāvākyas. They speak about the nature of ultimate Reality and about the ātman. *Tattvamasi*, however, in addition to being descriptive is also instructional. It is an *upadeśa vākya*. On the teacher conveying this upadeśa to his *āśrita* as the verse has it, the pupil meditates on it, gets his doubts resolved by discussion with his guru and then gets, not only the intellectual conviction of the truth of the statement, but also realises that truth in himself in terms of the mahāvākya *aham brahmāsmi* (I am Brahman) which is *anubhavavākya*.

Om Tat Sat is also a mahāvākya comprehending all the rest in terms of the praṇava. Om is the microsmic compendium of the vast and variegated statements of the several upaniṣads about Brahman (tat) which is the ultimate Reality (sat).[1]

Thus, Śri Dakṣināmūrti instructs the siṣya in the words *tattvamasi* (*bodhayati*) and then the siṣya gets direct realisation of its truth. By such realisation (sakṣātkaraṇāt) there is no return to the ocean of samsāra. The fulfilment of the instruction is the anubhava or sākṣātkāra.

IV

नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं
ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा बहिः स्पन्दते ।
जानामीति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्समस्तं जगत्
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

nānaccidraghatodarasthita
mahādīpa prabhābhāsvaram
jñānam yasya tu cakṣurādi
karaṇadvārābhahih spandate

---

1. *vide : sarvevedā yat padamāmananti*
tapāmsi sarvāṇi ca yadvadanti
yadiccantō brahmācaryam caranti
tatte padam sangraheṇa bravimyomityetat.

jānāmīti tamevabhāntam
anubhātyet samastam jagat
tasmai śri gurumūrtaye
nama idam śrī dakṣiṇāmūrtaye.

This śloka refers to the means of getting knowledge of the external world and of the ultimate source of that knowledge.

There is a pot with a number of holes and a lighted lamp is placed in it. The rays of light proceed from the lamp through the holes and fall on the objects outside the pot and illumine them. They become visible. Even so the source of our knowledge of the world is the self-luminous ātman inside which is of the nature of cit or pure intelligence. The *tejas* of this cit is reflected in the ego or āntaḥkarṇa, goes out of the pot of our being (viz. the body) through the holes of our sense-organs and falls or envelopes the external object. Then the ignorance (ajñāna) about the object is dispelled. The antaḥkaraṇa which was without object-consciousness is transformed into that consciousness which is called *antahḥaraṇa vritti* or the experiential knowledge of the object. Therefore, the know-

ledge of the world is the result of the impact of the pure cit which is the ātman on the object through the media of the antaḥkaraṇa and the sense organs resulting in the *suddha caitanya* becoming the *vritticaitanya* fashioned after the object. It is the jñāna, the inherent nature of the ātman which is reflected in sense knowledge. The whole universe shines with the help of its luminosity. This knowledge is personified in Śrī Guru and Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrti by whose luminosity the whole world shines. To that Dakṣiṇāmūrti, I make this salutation.

In *Joytir Brāhmaṇa* of the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, King Janaka asks the sage Yājñavalkya *'kimjyotirayam puruṣah* ?" By what light does a man go, do work and return in the world? The sage says : 'By the light of the sun'. Janaka asks : when the sun sets ?'

The Sage : By the light of the moon.'
Janaka : 'When the moon does not shine in the sky ?'
'By the light of fire', replies the sage.
'When the fire is not available ?'
'By speech (i.e., by the directions orally conveyed).
'When speech too is still ? (i.e. when there

is none to direct by word of mouth?)
'A man acts', says the sage, 'by the light of
his ātman'.

When all external lights are extinguished or are not available, a man walks, acts and returns by his *ātmajyotis*. It enlightens more truly and effectively than these physical lights, none of which has a native lustre of its own, whose lights are like candles held to the sun, and which derive their lustre only from the *ātma jyotis* which is eternal, pure and self-sustained. As the upaniṣad says:

na tatra sūryobhāti na candratārakam
nemāvidhyuta kuthoyamagnih
tamevabhāntam anubhāti sarvam
tasyabhāsa sarvamidam vibhāti

It is the truth contained in these passages that Śri Śankara affirms in this fourth stanza.

V

देहं प्राणमपीन्द्रियाण्यपि चलां बुद्धिं च शून्यं विदुः
स्त्रीबालान्धजडोपमास्त्वहमिति भ्रान्ता भृशं वादिनः ।
मायाशक्तिविलासकल्पितमहाव्यामोहसंहारिणे
तस्मै श्री गुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्री दक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

deham prāṇamapīndriyāṇyapi
calām buddhin ca sūnyam viduh
strībālandhajaḍopamastva—
hamiti bhrāntā bhṛsam vādinah
māyās'aktivilasākalpita—
mahāvyāmoha samhāriṇe
tāsmaiśrigurumūrtaye
nama idam śri dakṣiṇāmūrtāye

This verse relates to the determination of the identity of the ātman. There are several wrong views about the ātman held by people like women, boys, blind persons and fools who are ignorant about its nature. Some identify it with the body, others with the breath; others with the sense organs; others with the momentary cognition and still others with the void. Such delusions are brought about by the play of māyā. This neiscience can be removed by the upadeśa of the preceptor who is none other than Srī Dakṣināmūrti to whom I make this salutation.

The materialists called Cārvākas in India say he body made up of the elements is the ātman as e point to the body when we say 'I'. Others ly on our saying 'I breathe, I live, I am hungry, am thirsty'. These are qualities of the *prāṇa*. So

they hold that *prāṇa* is the I or the ātman. Still others rely on the statements which we make like 'I hear, I see, I smell. I move.' Still others maintain that the intellect or buddhi is the ātman. As a result of its activity, we get awareness or vijñāna of two kinds, one of ourselves and the other of material objects. The former is called *ālayāvijñāna* and the latter goes by the name of *pravṛtti vijñāna.* The one is self-consciousness and the other instigates activity, with reference to external things. Both the cognitions are momentary, each moment passes away leading to the next. The vijñanavādins among the Buddhists identify such vijñāna with the 'self', in whatever sense they understand it. Another school of Buddhists, the Mādhyamika school, says that the self is a void or sūnya as there is no vijñāna in suṣupti.

Neither of these can be equated with the ātman. The ātman is of the nature of intelligence; it is cit. The body and the senses are non-intelligent, *jaḍa.* These cannot function by themselves except in association with the cit which is the ātman. During sleep, dream and fainting and after death, there is no self-consciousness though the body remains. So, the body is not the ātman.

If the senses are the ātman, the loss of the functioning of one or more of these senses must militate against the ātman. Yet, the blind or the deaf person refers to his ātman despite the loss of his sense-organ.

The prāṇa too is not the ātman; for in deep sleep, the man breathes; prāṇa functions, but there is no knowledge or awareness of self. The momentary vijñāna of the buddhi cannot be the ātman as it has a beginning and an end. The ātman has neither. Further, buddhi is not self-luminous. It acts only by the reflection of the cit on the antahkaraṇa. The void of the sūnyavādins can never be the ātman as the ātman is an existent entity.

Nor can it be said that all these, the body, the breath, the sense organs, the intellect cumulatively constitute the ātman; for the integral character of the ātman will be impaired if one or more of these should get destroyed. Moreover, they do not function in unison; they have different characteristics and activities.

Therefore, the ātman is something inside the body etc. It is not small or minute, because it pervades the entire body. It is expansive or vibhu. The theory of the Jains who say that the ātman is of the size of the body, small in the case of an ant,

and big in the case of an elephant, and medium in man is wrong. For, when after death, a man's ātman enter into an ant's body, or an elephant's body in the next life, it will be too big for the ant, and too small for the elephant. This is absurd.

It is due to the delusion caused by māyā that one identifies one's self (ātman) with these which are not the self (anātman). Śri Śankara tenders his obeisance to Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrti who destroys this delusion and helps to effect the sākṣātkāra of the true ātman.

VI

राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दुसदृशो माया समाच्छादनात्
सन्मात्रः करणोपसंहरणतो योऽभूत् सुषुप्तः पुमान् ।
प्रागस्वाप्समिति प्रबोधसमये यः प्रत्यभिज्ञायते
तस्मै श्री गुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्री दक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

rāhugrastadivākarendusadrśo
māyā samāccādanāt
sanmātrakaraṇopāsamharaṇāto
yo' bhūt suṣuptah-pumān
prāgasvāpsamiti prabodha samaye
yah pratyabhijñāyate
tasmai śri gurumūrtaye
nama idam śridakṣiṇāmūrtaye.

This verse intimates the subsistence of the cit as sākṣicaitanya during deep sleep (suṣupti). It is clear to everyone that consciousness functions during waking life. We perceive the things of the world through the sense-organs and get knowledge in various ways. The mind is active in them. Likewise, during dream state too there is mental activity as the mind sees objects, is subject to feeling and emotions and induces dream actions. But what about the period of dreamless sleep? Is the cit present then? It would appear it is not there. To this the śloka replies:

> There is distinct cognition of gross and subtle objects respectively in jāgrat and in svapna. But during sleep, when the dream is over, there is no sense-organ activity, and there is a stillness of the mind, *manolaya*. So there is no discriminative awareness of objects. There is no viseṣajñāna because the sense-organs have subsided into their activating causes. Is the cit which is the ātman present then? Does it shine? Yes; says the śloka. It does in the same way as the sun and moon do during an eclipse, not brightly however, but hidden by the eclipsing agent. Though the sun and moon are invisible during the

eclipse, we infer their continued existence abiding before, during and after the eclipse. We say that during the eclipse the sun was the same that it was before and that it shines after it is over. Even so, in the case the man who sleeps, his cit is shrouded by māyā. When he wakes from his sleep, he establishes in his consciousness a continuity of his personal identity before, during and after sleep. This he gives expression to when, on waking from his sleep, he says : I slept happily; I did not know anything. The awareness of self-identity is called *pratyabhijñā*. To Śri Dakṣināmūrti who is the Supreme Self with whom this *pratyabhijna* is associated, I make this salutation.

The question, as we said, is this : Consciousness is present in waking and dream, but does it abide in dreamless sleep? The śloka says : It is there, but in a dormant state, subdued as it were by māyā which, as in other states, stands in the way of the super-conscious realisation of identification of the jīvātman with Brahman. The śloka likens the subdued consciousness to the eclipsed condition of the celestial orbes. 'Rāhugrasta' etc. emphasises the existence

of cit in suṣupti, through the evidence of pratyabhijñā.

But the important point in the śloka is the fact of *pratyabhijñā*, the linking together of the deep sleep state with the states anterior and posterior to it. This is done by the exclamation: 'I slept happily, I did not know anything.' This speaks to the lapse of external knowledge during sleep. But how can a person say on waking from sleep that, during sleep, he did not know anything. On waking, he can speak to his experience of that state. Whatever happened or did not happen in sleep does not continue on waking. If it did, the person cannot be said to have woken up. How then does the man who has woken from sleep say that during sleep he did not know anything? This is because says Śri Śankara there is an abiding identity of personality running through the sleep condition and the states prior and posterior to it. It is in virtue of that that the man who has woken from sleep (a) realises that he is the same who previously went to sleep, slept and is now awake, (b) that he did not know anything during sleep, and (c) that he slept happily. This cognition of personal identity is *pratiyabhijñā*.

The point to note here is that the ātman is sat, cit and ānanda. During sleep when it is

shrouded by māyā, its cit aspect suffers an eclipse. It remains, however, behind the cloud of māyā; as cit. It is not as if the ātman is not. It is as *sanmātram* in the language of the śloka. Also the ānanda aspect of the ātman too is present. For, on waking, the man says: I slept happily (*sukham asvāpsam*). The *sukha* is the ānanda of the ātman. Only, it is neither super-abundant nor super-excellent as the ānanda of Bramānubhava in the super-conscious state of transcendentally wakeful experience of identity with Brahman.

VII

बाल्यापिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु तथा सर्वास्ववस्थास्वपि
व्यावृत्तास्वनुवर्तमानमहमित्यन्तःस्फुरन्तं सदा ।
स्वात्मानं प्रकटीकरोति भजतां यो मुद्रया भद्रया
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

bālyādiṣvapi jāgradādiṣu tathā
sarvāsvasvasthāsvapi
vyāvṛttāsvanuvartamānamaham-
ityantahspurantam sadā
svātmānam prakatīkaroti
bhajatām yo mudrayā bhadrayā
tasmai śrigurumūrtaye
nama idam śridakṣiṇāmūrtaye.

The same concept of pratyabhijñā is further illustrated in this śloka. We saw that it is the same sākṣicaitanya that functions in jāgrat, svapna and suṣupti. There is a persisting sense of personal identity in the different stages of life.

> Infancy, boyhood, youth, manhood, old age are several stages in a person's life. One ceases to be an infant when one becomes a boy. Boyhood ceases on the arrival of youth. And so too in respect of manhood and old age. Though these stages are different, and each passes away before the other comes on, yet, the man is aware that it was he who was the infant, boy, youth and adult is now the old man. This sense of 'I' accompanies and persists in all these stages as it does through waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep and fainting. Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrti signifies by his auspicious symbol (*cinmudrā*) the fact of this pervasive and persisting self-identity in all the states. To Him I make this obeisance.

The idea is that the self does not change with the change of bodily states of growth or condition. Not only is it persistent, but it pervades the entire being of the person. It is not located in or confined

to only one part of him. In other words it not *aṇu*, but it is *vibhu*. There may be a passage from one state to another, and to all external appearances, a forgetting of earlier experiences, but the ātman as such abides continuingly in and through all of them.

It will be worthwhile to explain pratyabhijñā in some detail. Something must have been known before in order that it may be retained in memory. A thing is now seen by the senses. The awareness that what is now known is the same as was known before is called pratyabhijñā. The pratyabhijñā is a useful illustration to understand the purpose of the mahāvākya: *Tattvamasi*.

This is done by way of an example. We saw ten years ago in Madras a person of a small stature. We now see him in Delhi. He has now grown into one of a big size. From other signs, we understand that this man whom we now see is the same as he whomwe saw ten years ago. Abrogating the unessential accretions and changes, we identify the same individuality in the form known previously elsewhere and remembered now and in the form now perceived here. So we say 'this man whom I see now is the same as that man whom

I saw then and remember now. That man whom I knew then and there is this Devadatta whom I am now see here despite the differences of form and feature'. This recalling of the identity of a person is pratyabhijñā.

Even so, there arises pratyabhijñā in the realisation of the identity between the jīvātman and the Paramātman (Īṣvara) annulling the adventitious features of limited intelligence, circumscribed presence and finite powers on the one hand and omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence on the other noticing the identity of their essentials namely sat, cit and ānanda. Pratyabhijñā is this awakened consciousness of continuing and persistent identity of seemingly different things recognised in, through and in spite of these unessential differences.

VIII

विश्वं पश्यति कार्यकारणतया स्वस्वामिसंबन्धतः
शिष्याचार्यतया तथैव पितृपुत्राद्यात्मना भेदतः ।
स्वप्ने जाग्रति वा य एष पुरुषो मायापरिभ्रामितः
तस्मै श्री गुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

viśvam paśyati kāryakāraṇatayā
svasvāmisambandhatah

siṣyācāryatayā pitṛ putrād-
yātmanā bhedatah
svapne jāgrati vā eṣa puruṣo
māyāparibhrāmitah
tasmai śrigurumūrtaye
nama idam śridakṣiṇāmūrtaye.

The ātman in all the jīvas is one only and all pervasive. There are no differences in it. If individuals appear different and many, it is not because the ātman in them is different. Like the same electric current appearing in different forms, shapes and degrees of incandescence in different electrtc bulbs, so too the ātman appears as various jīvātmans encased in different bodies and subject to their limitations. This is brought out in verse 8.

A person deluded by māyā (ajñāna) sees the world both in his waking condition and in dream as distinguished into effects and causes, as master and servant, as pupil and teacher, and similarly, as father and son. But upon the disappearance of this ajñāna by the dawn of tattvajñāna, this delusion wrought by māyā vanishes. I bow to that Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrti who imparts this jñāna.

This vyāvahārika world is one in which experience of pularality will subsist as such so long as we are subject to māyā. And, during the pendancy of māyā, it is reckoned and dealt with as being true as it appears. All forms of duality are the effects of māyā which splits the integral unity of the ātman into seeming diversities.

It is the same ātman that is spoken of from a vyāvahārika point of view as cause and effect, master and servant, teacher and pupil, father and son. It is the same rope that is spoken of differently as a snake, or as a cleft on the ground or as a water line. None is different from the other or from the original rope.

It is all a verbal distinction as when one says Rahu's head. Rahu is the head and Ketu is the tail of the celestial serpent. When it is said Rahu's head, a distinction which does not exist is made between Rahu and his head : Similarly, one speaks of the 'space in the sky' as if sky and space are different. So, also when it is said 'snowman', it is not as if snow and man here are different. The snow is the man and the man is the snow. Thus the śloka emphasises that empirical distinctions of such dualities are imaginary and the non-difference is the truth.

The duality of teacher and pupil is also included in this list of dualities which are not ultimately real. Yes; even these and why, the teaching that is imparted belong to the region of mitthyā. The guru, the sisya and the upadeśa, all belong to the vyāvahārika world which will all be sublated on the dawn of jñāna. Even the śrutis, the Vidic texts teaching the ultimate truth pertain to the predicament of duality and are annulled in the last resort in the unitary experience of transcendental aloneness. The Vedas too cease to be Vedas in that stage (*yatra veda avedāh*).

IX

भूरंभास्यनलोऽनिलोंऽम्बरमहर्नाथोहिमांशुः पुमान्
इत्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्त्यष्टकम् ।
नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभोः
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

bhūrambhamsyanalo'nilombaram
aharnātho himāmsupumān
ityābhāti carācarātmakamidam
yasyaiva mūrtyaṣtakam
nānyatkincna vidyate vimṛśatām
yasmātparasmāt vibhoh
tasmai s'rigurumūrtaye
nama idam s'rī dakṣiṇāmūrtaye.

How can this māyā be got rid of to obtain the intuitive experience of Brahman uttered in the words 'I am Brahman'? The ninth śloka intimates that this is to be attained by worship of the Supreme as Parameśwara.

> Earth, water, fire, wind, space, the sun, the moon, and the person subject to pleasure and pain whatever moves or is unmoving are all eight forms of the Supreme Being. For those who analyse them there is nothing apart from the Supreme all-pervasive Brahman.
>
> All these have their being as expressions of the Divine; I make my obeisance to that Divine Being that is the preceptor Śri Dakṣināmūrti by whose grace this knowledge and the liberation arising therefrom are attained.

It has been said *īs'varānugrahādeva pumsām-advaitā vāsanā*. It is only by the grace of the Lord that persons can be inclined to Advaita (*īśvarat jñāmanviccet*). It is only by our concentrated devotion to the saguṇa Brahman by methods of yoga that one can rise to the heights of the realisation of one's non-difference from nirguṇa Brahman. The Supreme Being is all the worlds as Sri Kriṣna told and showed to Arjuna in the

Gītā. He is the conjoint expression, the samaṣṭi of all the elements which constitute the universe. Man is the microcosm of this Grand Universal. The world in which he lives, moves and has his being is the differentiated expression of the Supreme, variegated in form and name, in feature, colour and character. All this is known as vyaṣṭi. Man is the abridgement of God with parts distinguished in his person.

So, starting with the adoration of one's own encased self one proceeds to the stage of the worship of the cosmic Puruṣa who is called Hiraṇyagarbha, by whose grace one crosses the ocean of māyā-ridden vyāvahāric samsāra, and reaches the bourne of Advaitic anubhava from which, as the Vedas promise, there is no return (*anāvṛttiśabdāt*).

X

सर्वात्मत्त्वमिति स्फुटीकृतमिदं यस्मादमुष्मिंस्तवे
तेनास्य श्रवणात्तदर्थमननात् ध्यानाच्च सङ्कीर्तनात् ।
सर्वात्मत्त्वमहाविभूतिसहितं स्यादीश्वरत्वं स्वतः
सिध्येत्तत्पुनरष्टधा परिणतं चैश्वर्यमव्याहतम् ॥

sarvātmatvamitiṣphuṭīkṛtamidam
yasmādamuṣminstave
tenāsyaśravaṇāt tadarttha
mananāt dhyānācca saṅkīrtanāt

sarvātmatvamahāvibhūti
sahitam syādīśvaratvam svatas sidhyet
tatpunaraṣṭadhā pariṇatam
caiśvaryamavyāhatam.

The tenth śloka intimates the fruit of the worship of Śri Dakṣiṇāmūrti as indicated in the previous nine ślokas.

Sarvātmatvam is the realisation that everything is integrated as One Ātman pervading all things of the universe, moving and unmoving. This truth has been clearly shown in this stotra. By receiving it reverently from a guru, by thinking on its import, by meditating on it without intermission, or even by uttering it with devotion, a person can obtain lordship along with sarvātmatva. In addition, as a secondary and incidental benefit, the eight excellences will accrue to him of their own accord.

The main purpose of the spiritual adventure outlined in the stotra is to realise one's own ātman as non-different from the Universal Ātman, to make the metaphysical theory of jīva-Brahma-abheda a fact of one's own abiding and meaningful experience. When the sense of jīva-Brahma abheda is attained, then all the psychophysical occult powers too are acquired. This is compared to a person getting rid of the cold impinging on his body in winter while he sits before a fire to cook his food. The main purpose is to cook the food; the warming of the body is an unsought, but concommitant consequence of the cooking process. The aspirant should not be carried away by these yogic powers which will accrue to him. He must not allow himself to be deflected from his main object of the realisation of the sarvātmatva. He must be indifferent to them even as he who makes a long jump on a lighted road is not concerned about his shadow that leaps with him.

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PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN is now Honorary Director of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Madras Kendra after retiring from the Headship of the Department of Philosophy in the Vivekananda College, Madras and the Bhavan's College, Bombay.